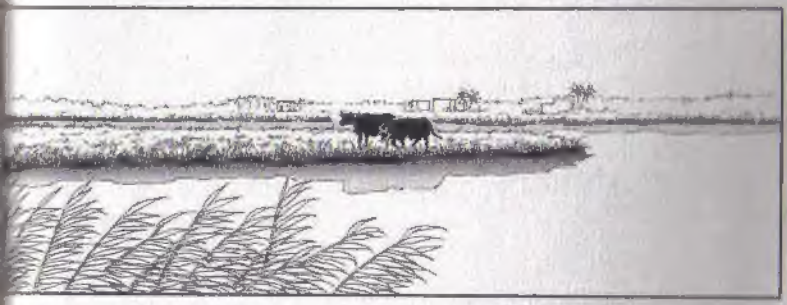
VIZ media
shôjo

RED RIVER

20

story and art by Chie Shinohara

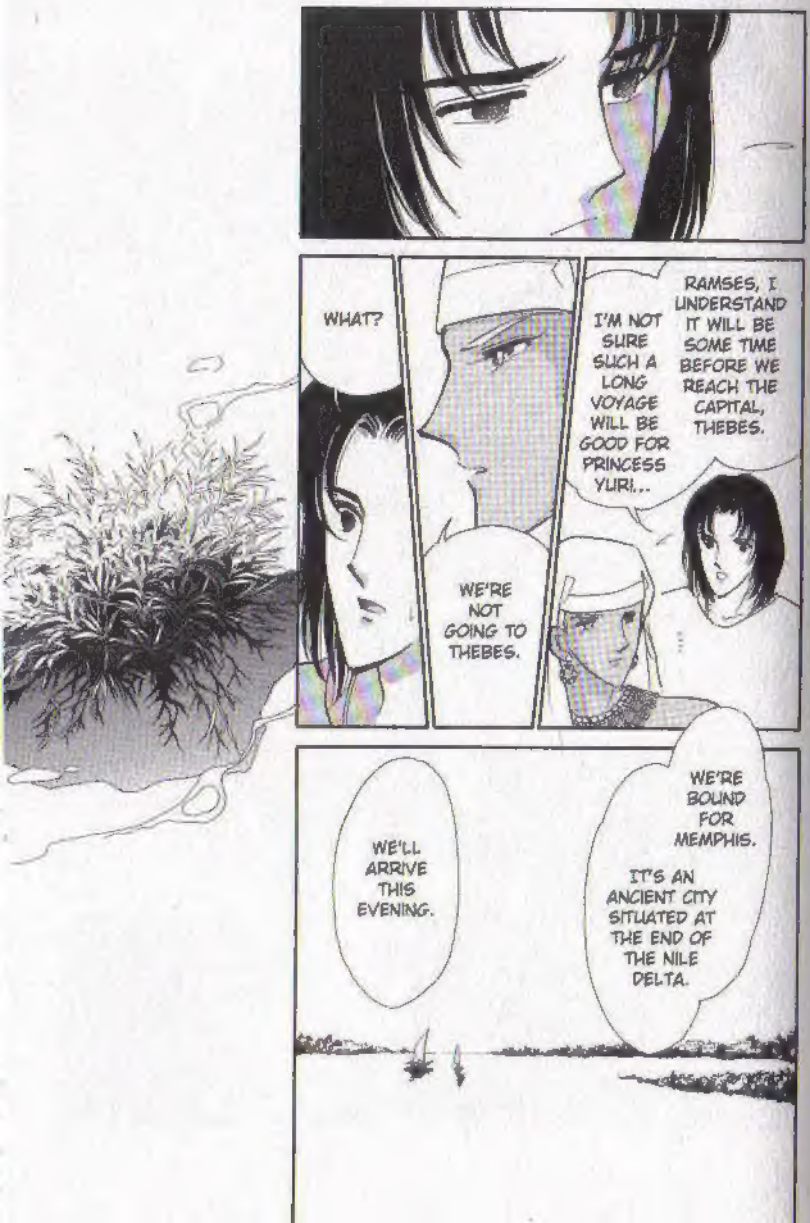


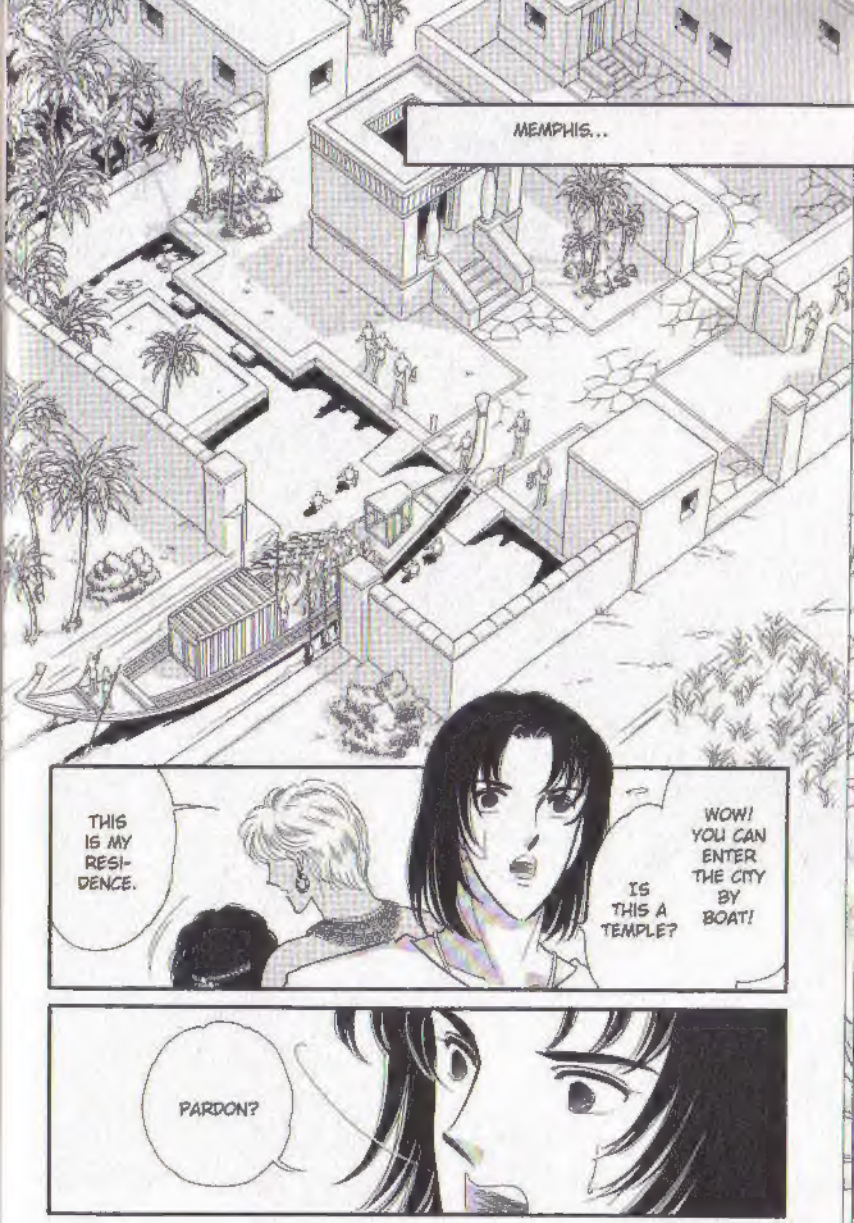
WELL?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE NILE?

THE WATER UPRIVER IS VERY CALM.
DON'T YOU LIKE IT?

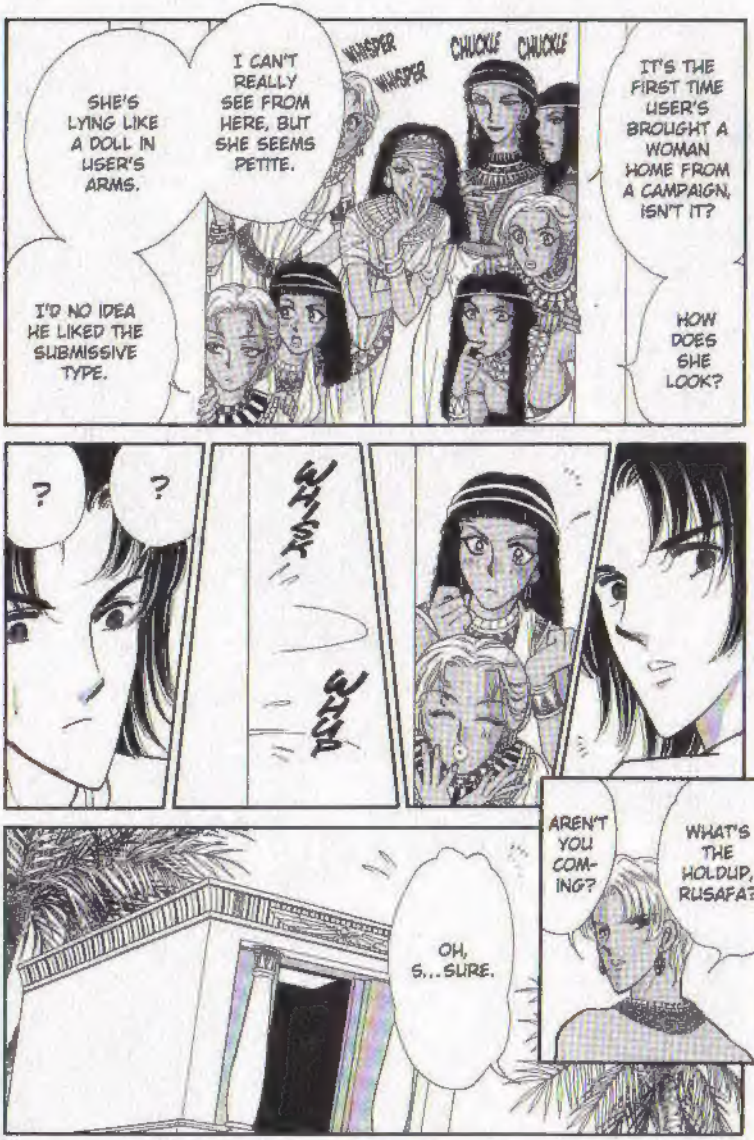
...PRIN-
CESS
YURI?
HOW
ABOUT
SOME
FRUIT...
THE
SUN IS
VERY
STRONG.
YOU MUST
BE THIRSTY.
CARE FOR
SOMETHING
TO DRINK?

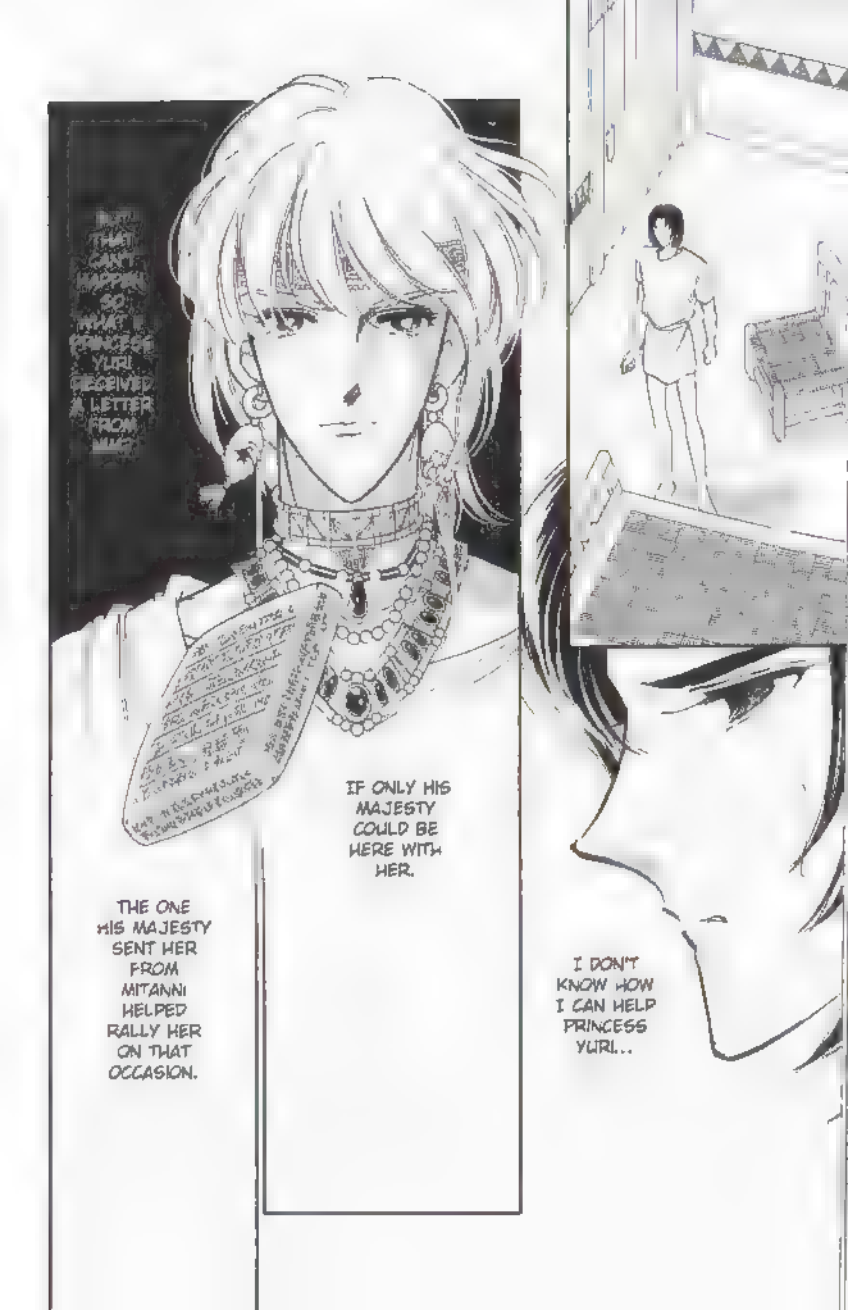
I DON'T REALLY CARE ABOUT ANYTHING.
BUT I DON'T REALLY CARE...
EVERYTHING IS VERY DIFFERENT HERE THAN IN ANATOLIA.
THE WATERS OF THE NILE ARE GENTLE, BUT DARK.
THE SUN IS SCORCHING HERE.

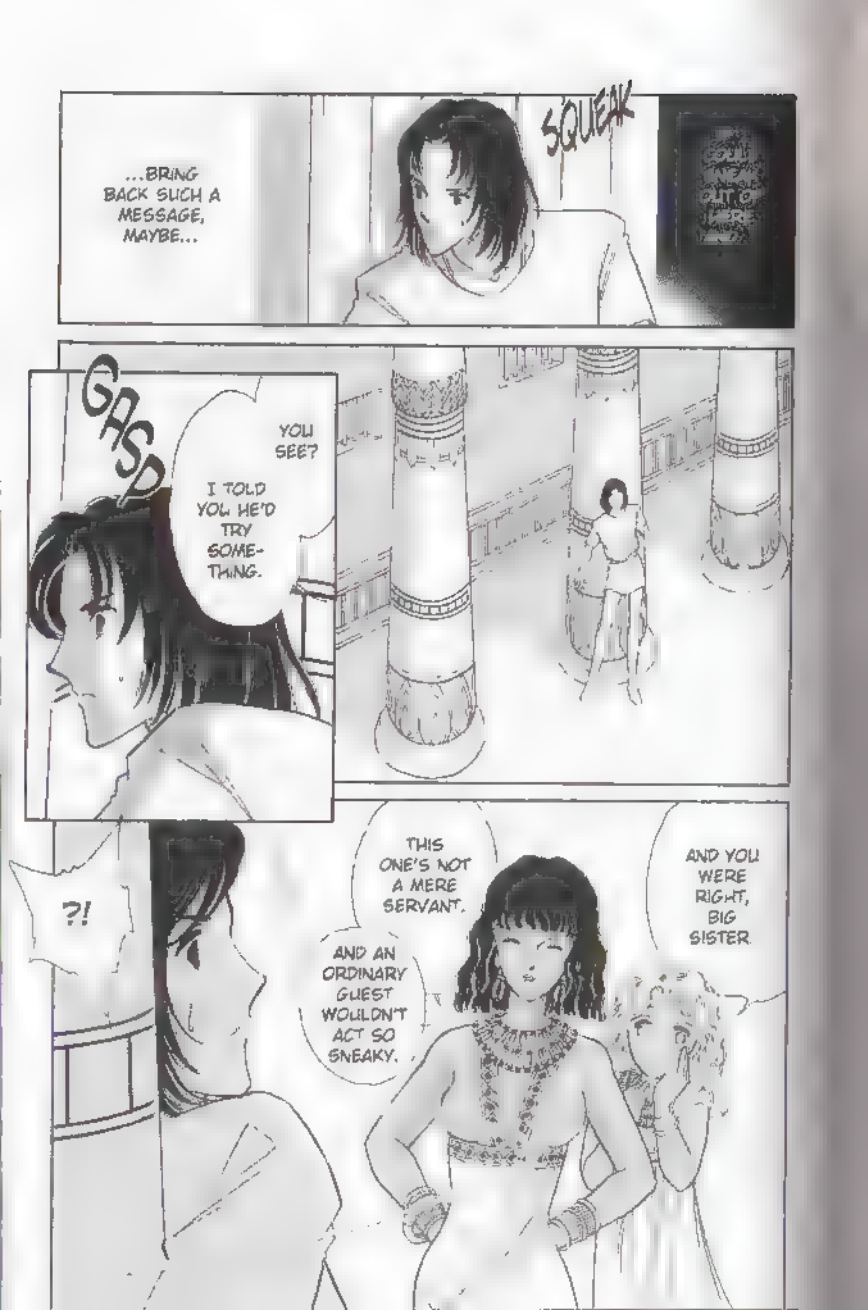

RAMSES, I UNDERSTAND IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE REACH THE CAPITAL, THEBES.
I'M NOT SURE SUCH A LONG VOYAGE WILL BE GOOD FOR PRINCESS YURI...
WHAT?
WE'RE NOT GOING TO THEBES.
WE'RE BOUND FOR MEMPHIS.
IT'S AN ANCIENT CITY SITUATED AT THE END OF THE NILE DELTA.
WE'LL ARRIVE THIS EVENING.

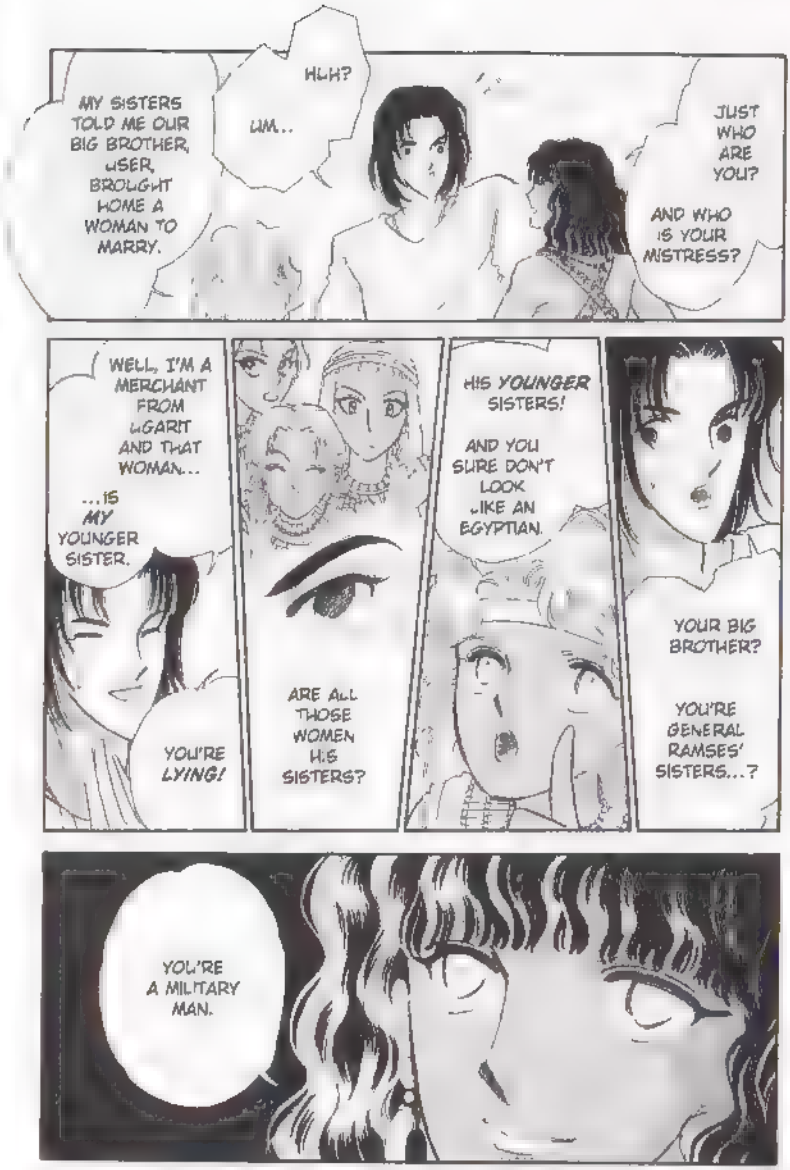

MEMPHIS...
WOW! YOU CAN ENTER THE CITY BY BOAT!
IS THIS A TEMPLE?
THIS IS MY RESI-DENCE.
PARDON?

HMM...
IS EVERY-THING READY ACCORDING TO THE INSTRUCTIONS I SENT AHEAD?
YES, SIR. WE HAVE PLACED ALL THE NECESSARY ITEMS IN THE LADY'S ROOM.
WELCOME HOME, MASTER.
SHE'S STILL IN SHOCK FROM THE MISCARRIAGE.
I WISH I COULD LIFT HER SPIRITS SOMEHOW.
CHUCKLE
CHUCKLE
IS THAT HER?
I THINK SO.


SHE'S LYING LIKE A DOLL IN USER'S ARMS.
I CAN'T REALLY SEE FROM HERE, BUT SHE SEEMS PETITE.
I'D NO IDEA HE LIKED THE SUBMISSIVE TYPE.
WHISPER
WHISPER
CHUCKLE
CHUCKLE
IT'S THE FIRST TIME USER'S BROUGHT A WOMAN HOME FROM A CAMPAIGN, ISN'T IT?
HOW DOES SHE LOOK?
?
?
SHIVER
SHIVER
OH, S...SURE.
AREN'T YOU COMING?
WHAT'S THE HOLDUP, RUSAFA?


THAT CAN'T BE SO. WHAT PRINCESS YURI RECEIVED A LETTER FROM MITANNI
IF ONLY HIS MAJESTY COULD BE HERE WITH HER.
THE ONE HIS MAJESTY SENT HER FROM MITANNI HELPED RALLY HER ON THAT OCCASION.
I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN HELP PRINCESS YURI...


...BRING BACK SUCH A MESSAGE, MAYBE...
SQUEAK
GASP
YOU SEE?
I TOLD YOU HE'D TRY SOME-THING.
?!
THIS ONE'S NOT A MERE SERVANT.
AND AN ORDINARY GUEST WOULDN'T ACT SO SNEAKY.
AND YOU WERE RIGHT, BIG SISTER.


MY SISTERS TOLD ME OUR BIG BROTHER, USER, BROUGHT HOME A WOMAN TO MARRY.
HUH?
UM...
JUST WHO ARE YOU?
AND WHO IS YOUR MISTRESS?
WELL, I'M A MERCHANT FROM UGARIT AND THAT WOMAN...
...IS MY YOUNGER SISTER.
YOU'RE LYING!
ARE ALL THOSE WOMEN HIS SISTERS?
HIS YOUNGER SISTERS!
AND YOU SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE AN EGYPTIAN.
YOUR BIG BROTHER?
YOU'RE GENERAL RAMSES' SISTERS...?
YOU'RE A MILITARY MAN.

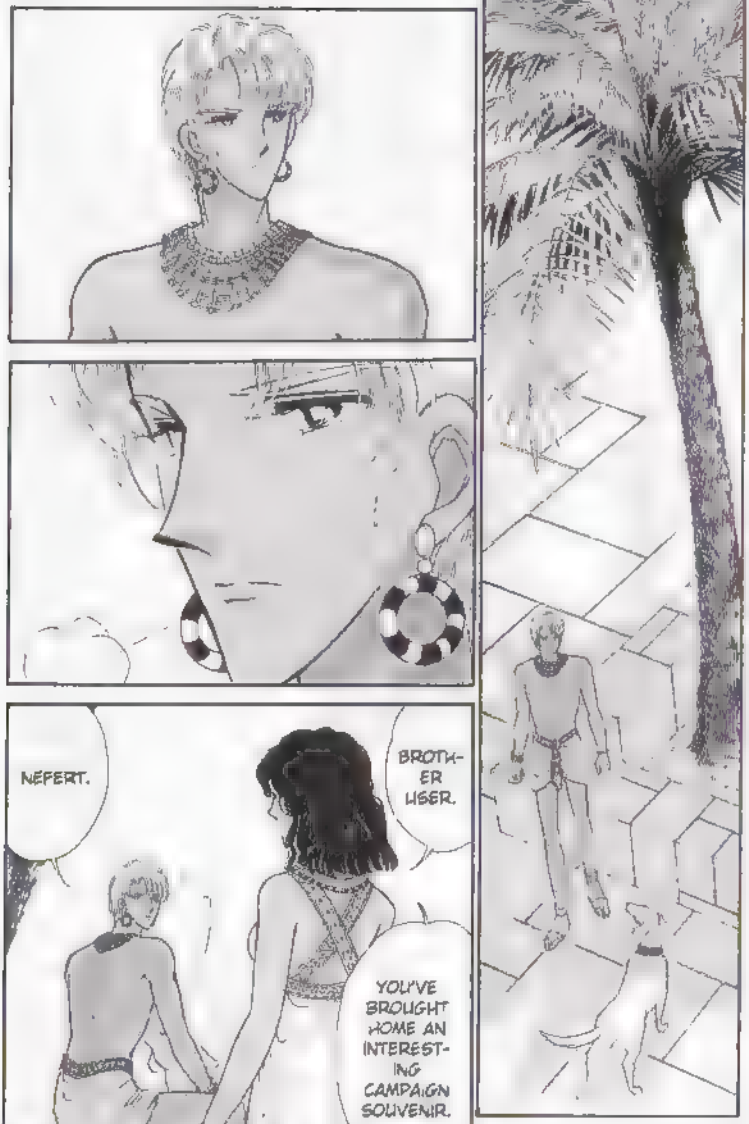
A HIGH-RANKING OFFICER, UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS.
THOSE CALLUSES ON YOUR FINGERS. .
...COME FROM MANY YEARS PULLING A BOW.
OURS IS A MILITARY FAMILY, SO I KNOW.
OUR OLDER SISTERS SAID SHE SEEMED TO BE SUBMISSIVE, BUT...
I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF WOMAN WOULD ACCOMPANY A MAN LIKE YOU.
...I KNOW MY BROTHER WOULDN'T CHOOSE THAT SORT OF WOMAN FOR HIMSELF.

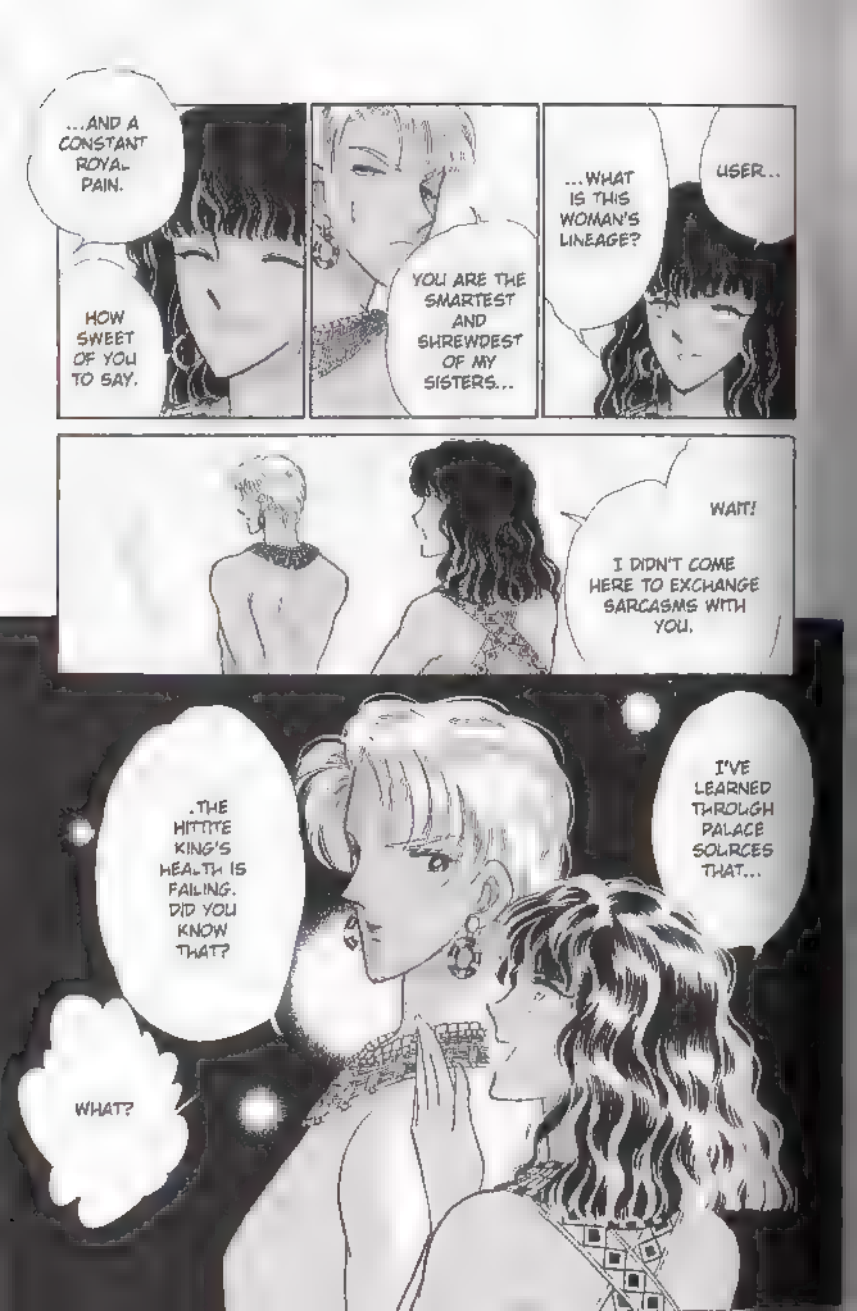
YURI?
YURI...
PLEASE, YOU MUST EAT SOME-THING.
TUNK

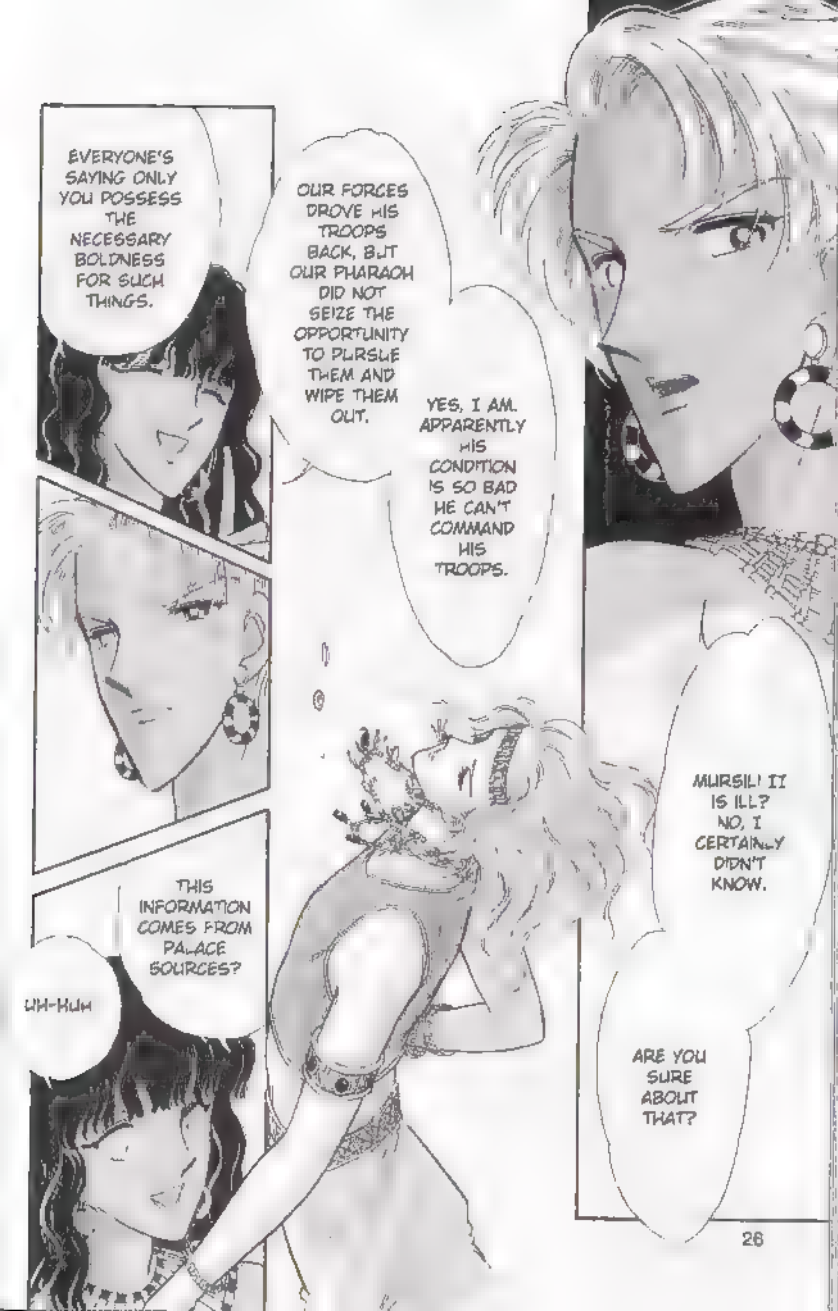
ALL I KNOW IS I LOST KAIL'S BABY.

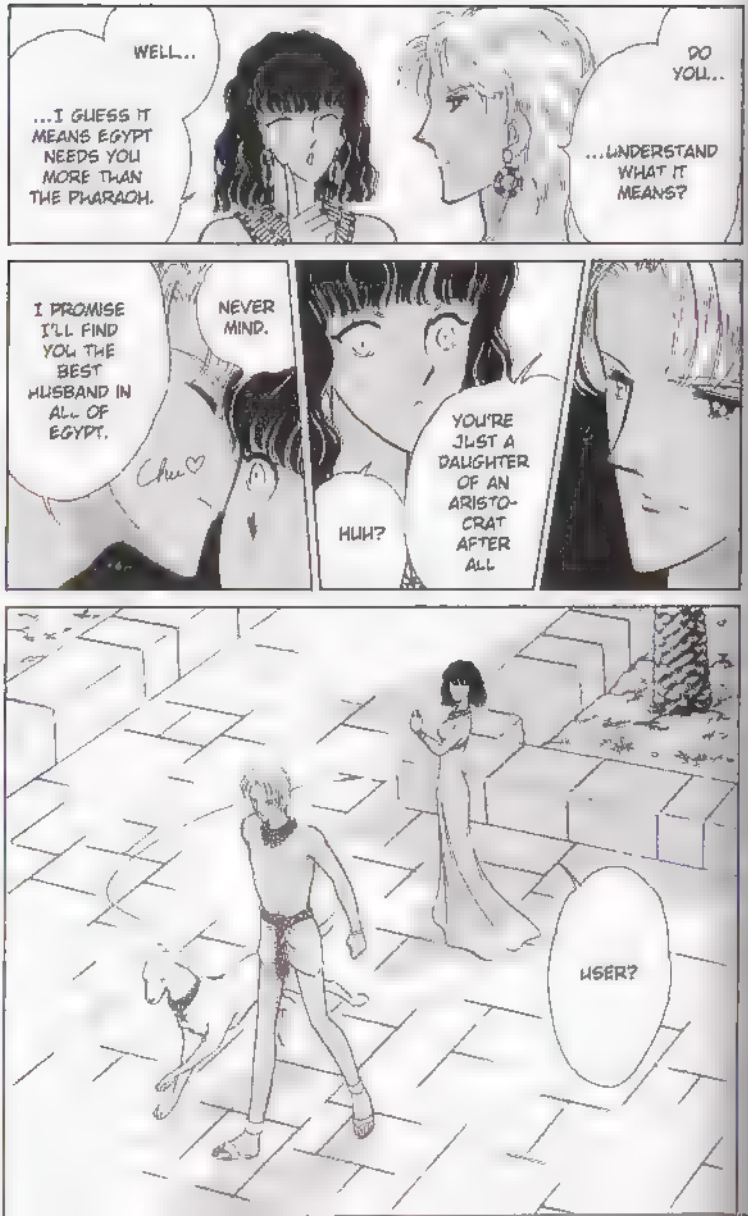
I'M SO EMPTY, I CAN'T FEEL ANYTHING.

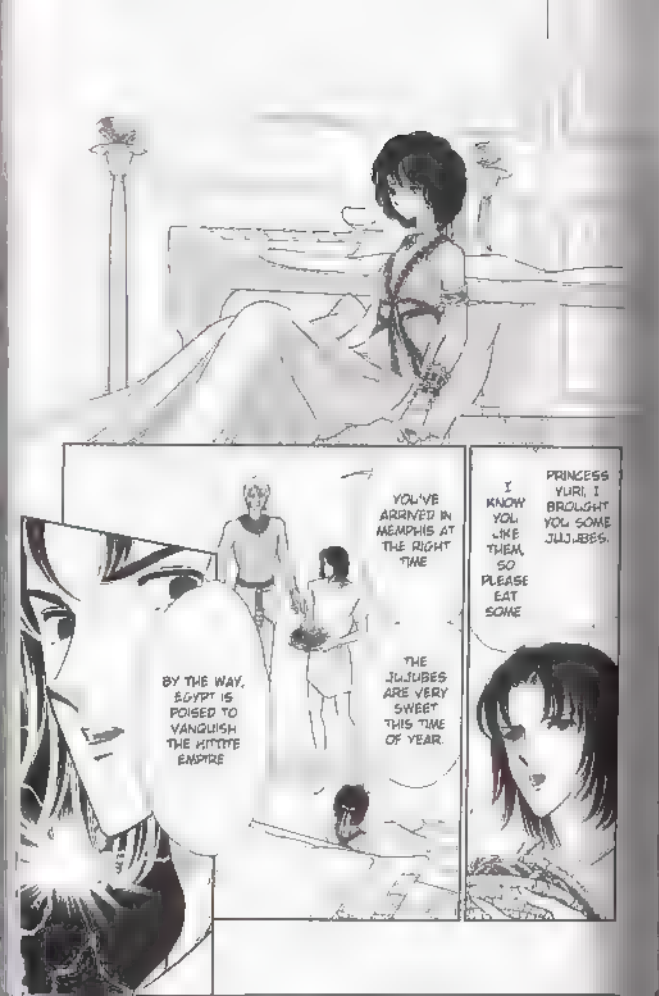
WHY AM I HERE? WHAT AM I DOING HERE? WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO HERE?
I KNOW I SHOULD TRY TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER, BUT I CAN'T.

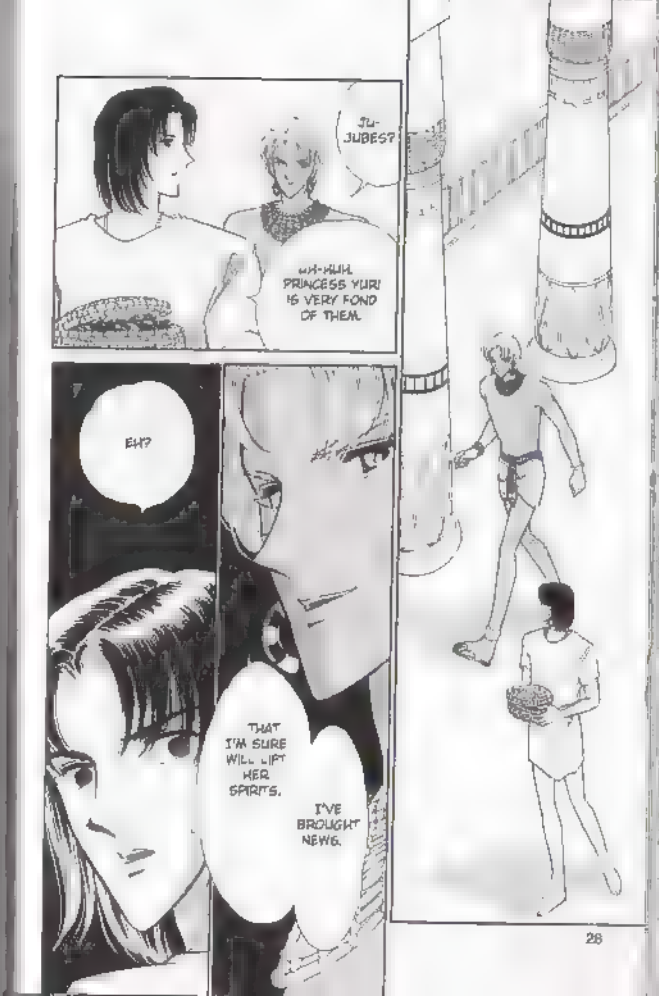

NEFERT.
BROTHER USER.
YOU'VE BROUGHT HOME AN INTERESTING CAMPAIGN SOUVENIR.


...AND A CONSTANT ROYAL PAIN.
HOW SWEET OF YOU TO SAY.
YOU ARE THE SMARTEST AND SHREWDEST OF MY SISTERS...
...WHAT IS THIS WOMAN'S LINEAGE?
USER...
WAIT!
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO EXCHANGE SARCASMS WITH YOU.
I'VE LEARNED THROUGH PALACE SOURCES THAT...
.THE HITTITE KING'S HEALTH IS FAILING. DID YOU KNOW THAT?
WHAT?

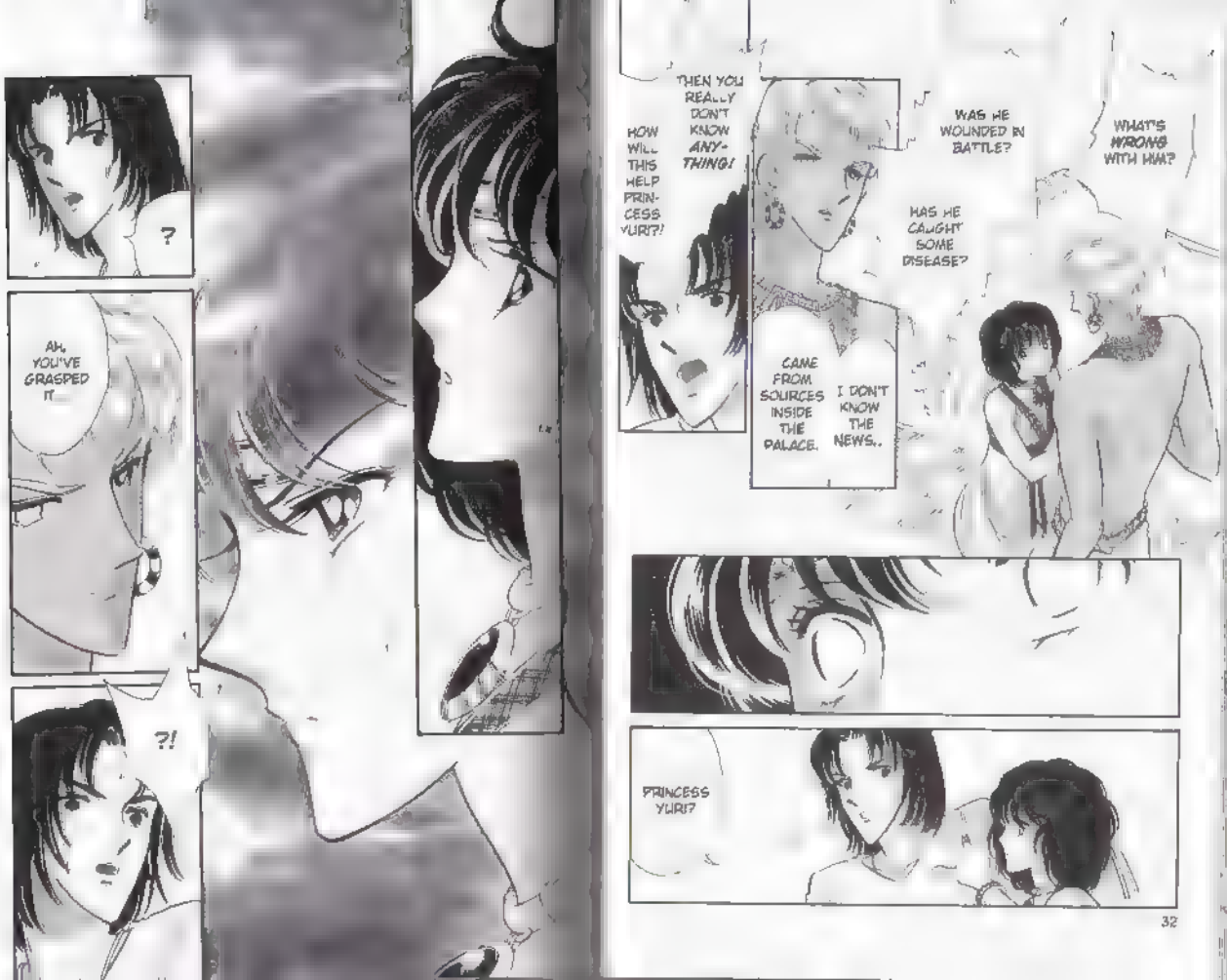

EVERYONE'S SAYING ONLY YOU POSSESS THE NECESSARY BOLDNESS FOR SUCH THINGS.
OUR FORCES DROVE HIS TROOPS BACK, BUT OUR PHARAOH DID NOT SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE THEM AND WIPE THEM OUT.
YES, I AM. APPARENTLY HIS CONDITION IS SO BAD HE CAN'T COMMAND HIS TROOPS.
MURSIL! II IS ILL? NO, I CERTAINLY DIDN'T KNOW.
ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THAT?
THIS INFORMATION COMES FROM PALACE SOURCES?
UH-HUH


WELL...
...I GUESS IT MEANS EGYPT NEEDS YOU MORE THAN THE PHARAOH.
DO YOU..
...UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS?
I PROMISE I'LL FIND YOU THE BEST HUSBAND IN ALL OF EGYPT.
NEVER MIND.
HUH?
YOU'RE JUST A DAUGHTER OF AN ARISTO-CRAT AFTER ALL
USER?


YOU'VE ARRIVED IN MEMPHIS AT THE RIGHT TIME
BY THE WAY, EGYPT IS POISED TO VANQUISH THE HITTITE EMPIRE
THE JUJUBES ARE VERY SWEET THIS TIME OF YEAR.
PRINCESS YURI, I BROUGHT YOU SOME JUJUBES.
I KNOW YOU LIKE THEM, SO PLEASE EAT SOME

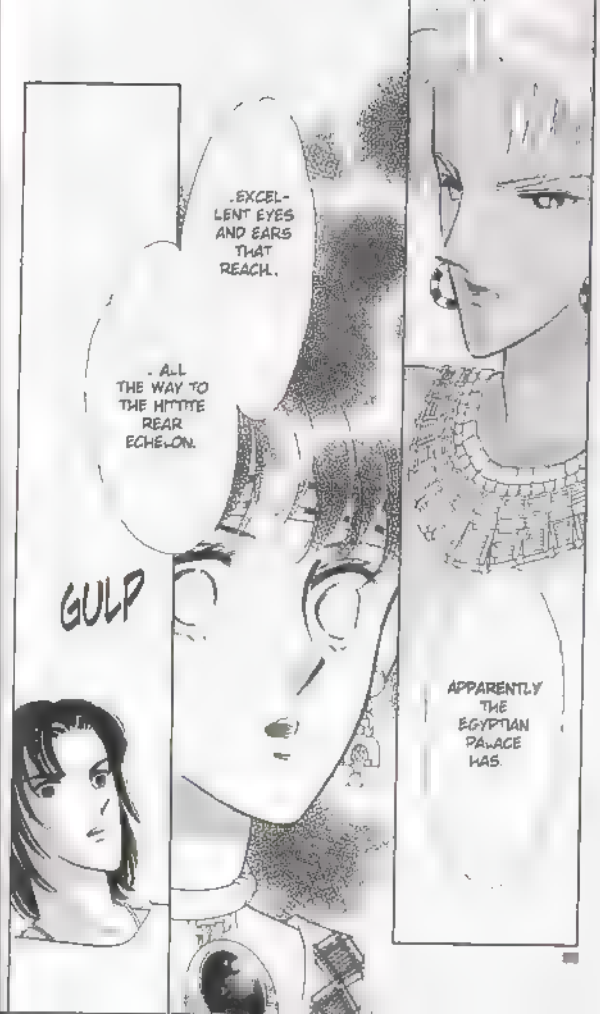

JU-JUBES?
UH-HUH. PRINCESS YURI IS VERY FOND OF THEM.
EH?
I'VE BROUGHT NEWS.
THAT I'M SURE WILL LIFT HER SPIRITS.

I LEARNED THAT MURSIL II
CRUNCH
IS GRAVELY ILL... OUR FORCES WILL TAKE EVERY ADVANTAGE OF THAT
HOW DID YOU HEAR OF THIS?!
DOES IT MATTER? THE HITTITE EMPIRE HAS NO ONE TO REPLACE MURSIL! II
IF HE IS TOO ILL TO LEAD HIS ARMY, EGYPT WILL BE ASSURED OF VICTORY OVER THE HITTITES.
!!
OH SUCH NEWS WOULD ROUSE HER
YOU SAY.
KAIL IS ILL?
K..KAIL IS ILL?!


?
AH, YOU'VE GRASPED IT.
?!
PRINCESS YURI?
I DON'T KNOW THE NEWS..
CAME FROM SOURCES INSIDE THE PALACE.
HOW WILL THIS HELP PRINCESS YURI?
THEN YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANY-THING!
WAS HE WOUNDED IN BATTLE?
HAS HE CAUGHT SOME DISEASE?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?

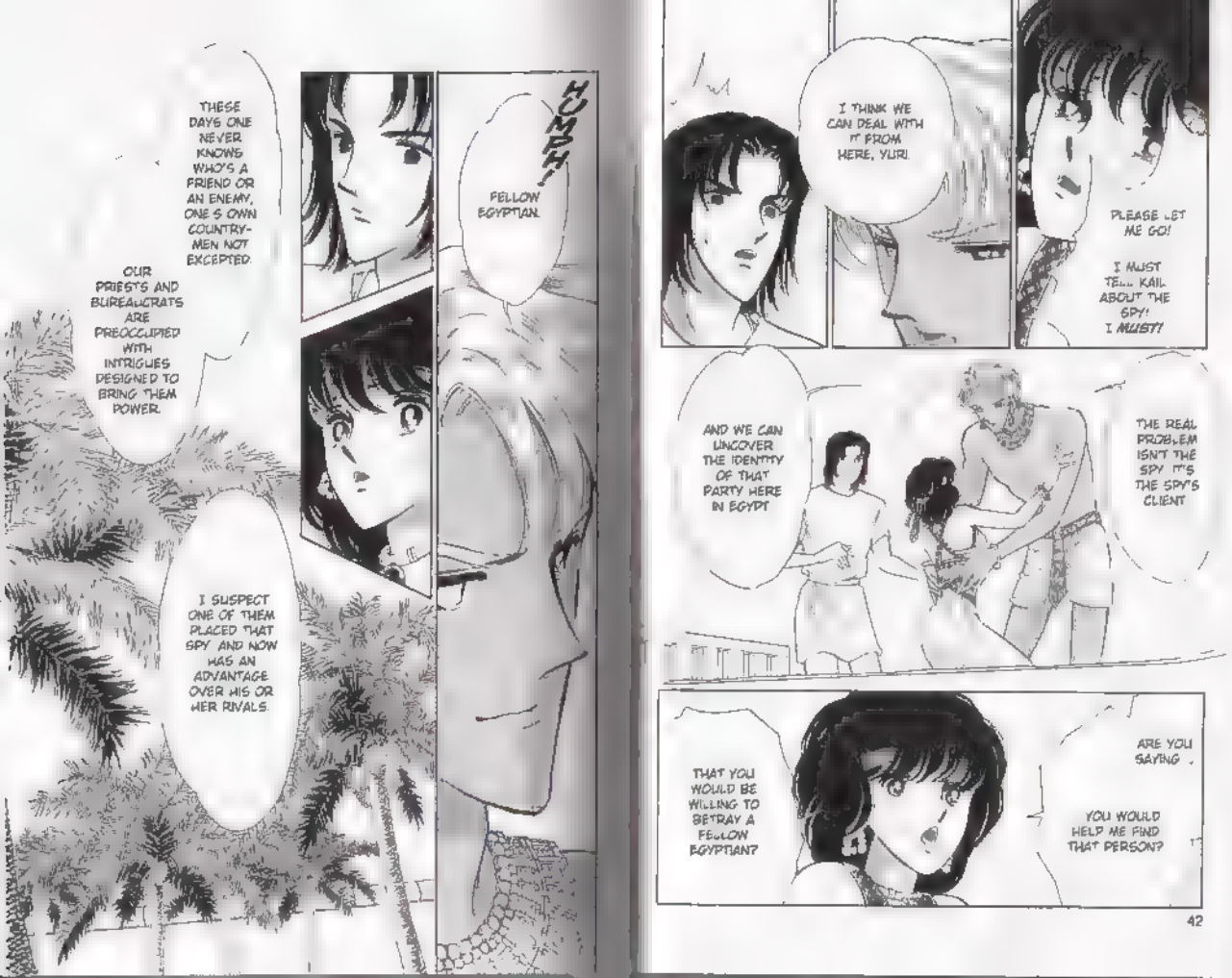
THUD
THUD
YOU MEAN THERE'S A SPY?
CLEARLY, SOMEONE MUST BE.
AH!
THUNK
SO THIS ISN'T A MILITARY REPORT.
BUT COVERTLY ACQUIRED INFORMATION?
EXACTLY
SO THE QUESTION IS,
HOW WAS THIS [redacted]TION CONVEYED?
AND WHO RECEIVED IT?

RAMSES IS RIGHT! THIS COULD VERY WELL DOOM THE HITTITE EMPIRE!

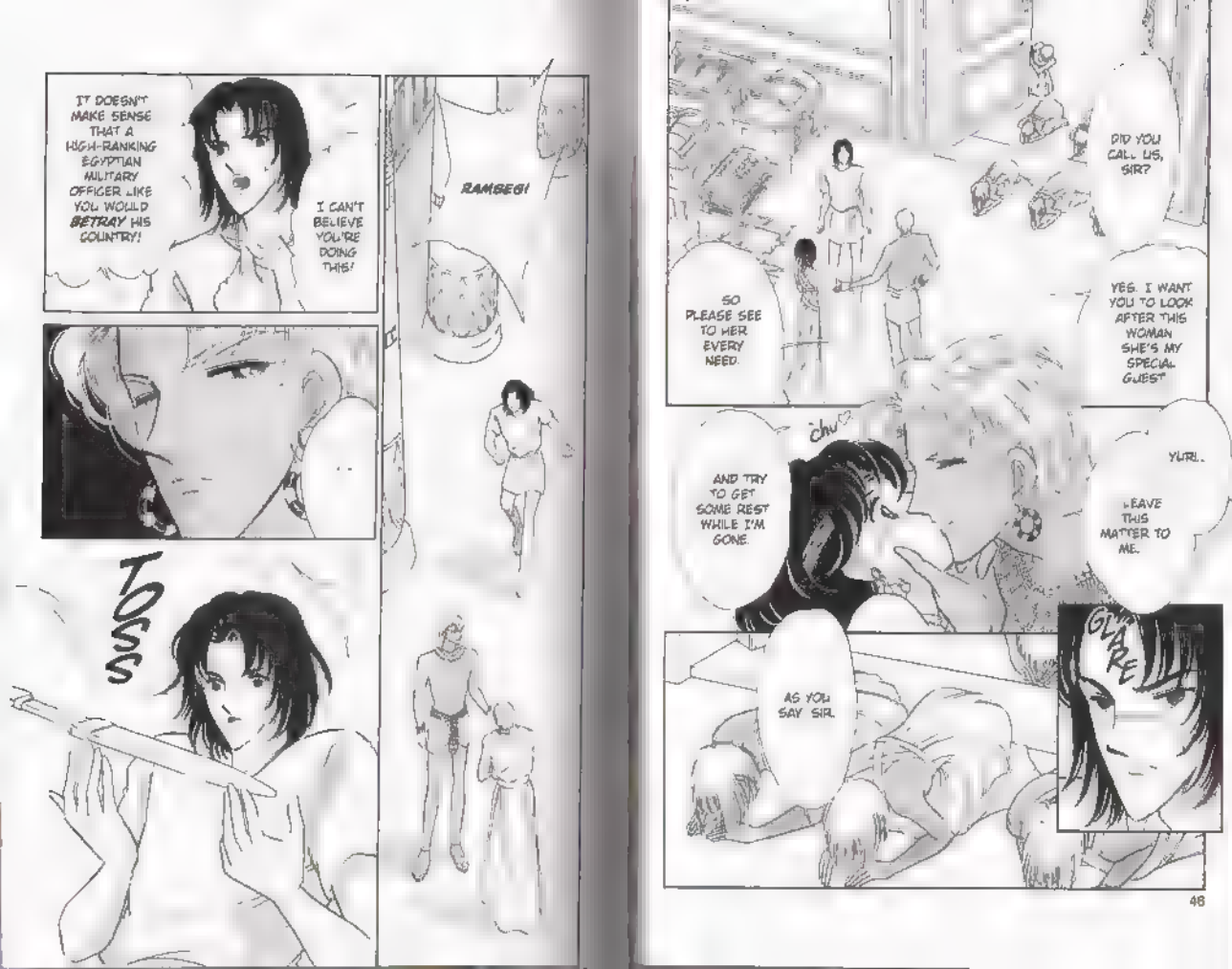

APPARENTLY THE EGYPTIAN PALACE HAS
EXCELLENT EYES AND EARS THAT REACH.
ALL THE WAY TO THE HITTITE REAR ECHELON.
GULP

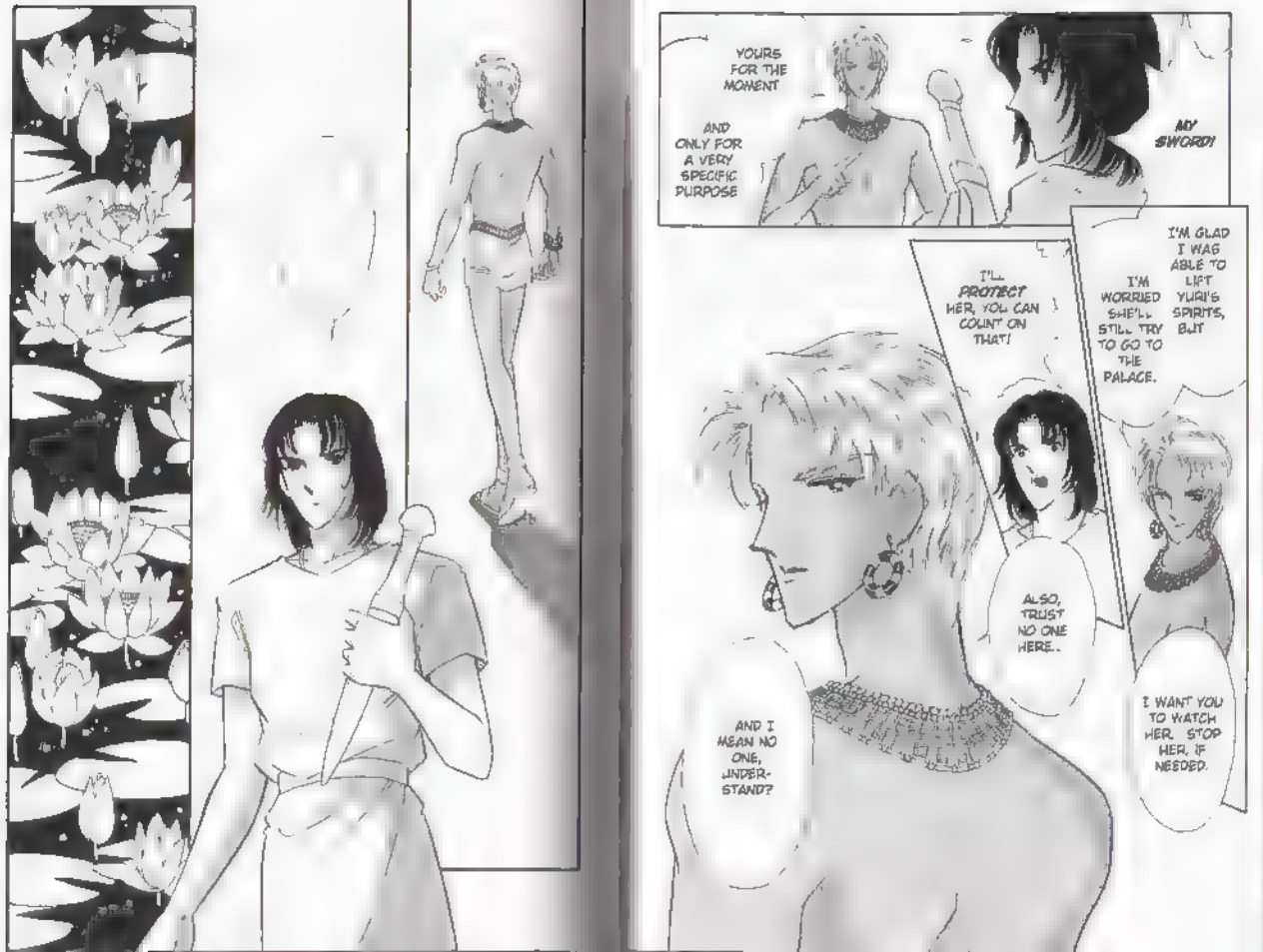
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE. I KNOW THEM AND TRUST THEM ALL.
FOR ONE CLOSE ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO REPORT ON HIS HEALTH
COULD THERE REALLY BE A SPY AMONG KAIL'S AIDES?

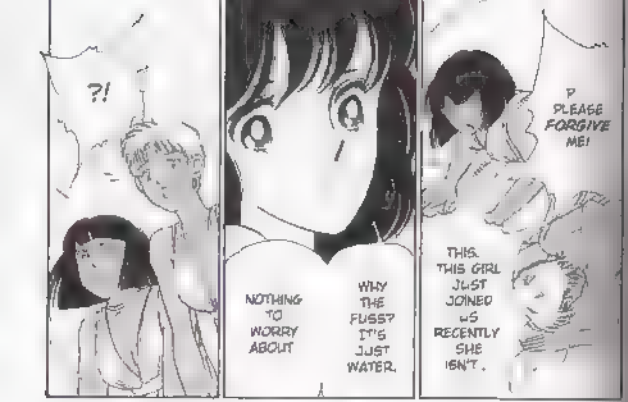
UNNH
THIS IS PRECISELY WHY I BROUGHT YOU HERE.
PRINCESS YURI!
SLUMP
YOU CAN'T TRAVEL IN THIS WEAKENED CONDITION.
..LET ME GO!
I NEED TO GO HOME! I MUST SEE KAIL!
..SO WHO IS DOING THIS FOUL THING?!
PRINCESS YURI!
YURI?

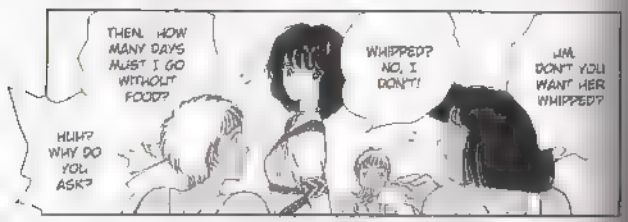

THESE DAYS ONE NEVER KNOWS WHO'S A FRIEND OR AN ENEMY, ONE'S OWN COUNTRYMEN NOT EXCEPTED.
OUR PRIESTS AND BUREAUCRATS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH INTRIGUES DESIGNED TO BRING THEM POWER.
I SUSPECT ONE OF THEM PLACED THAT SPY AND NOW HAS AN ADVANTAGE OVER HIS OR HER RIVALS.
HUMPH!
FELLOW EGYPTIAN.
I THINK WE CAN DEAL WITH IT FROM HERE, YURI.
PLEASE LET ME GO! I MUST TELL KAIL ABOUT THE SPY! I MUST!
AND WE CAN UNCOVER THE IDENTITY OF THAT PARTY HERE IN EGYPT
THE REAL PROBLEM ISN'T THE SPY IT'S THE SPY'S CLIENT
THAT YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO BETRAY A FELLOW EGYPTIAN?
ARE YOU SAYING . . . YOU WOULD HELP ME FIND THAT PERSON?

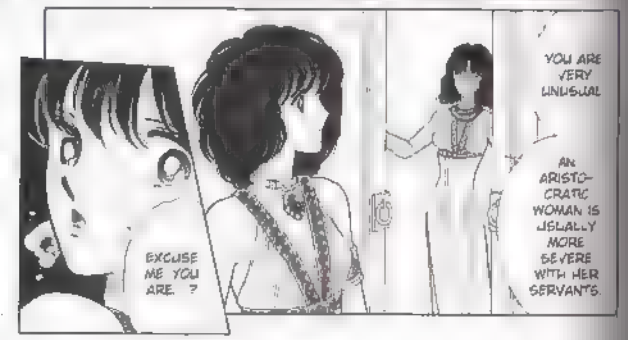
IN EGYPT THE PHARAOH IS A GOD. AND HE ALONE RULES THE NATION.
RAMSES. .
I CHAFE AT OUR CURRENT PHARAOH'S INCOMPE-TENCE. BUT
.I'M TRULY OUTRAGED THAT SOMEONE IS GATHERING INTELLIGENCE AND NOT SHARING IT WITH OUR RULER! THE RANK AMBITION BEHIND THAT CANNOT BE GOOD FOR OUR NATION!
IN THAT SENSE WE HAVE A SHARED INTEREST IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THIS.
I WILL SEND MEN WITH APPROPRIATE SKILLS TO THE PALACE TO INVESTIGATE
I'LL GO THERE WITH THEM!
PRINCESS YURI!
BUT I MUST
TO WHAT PURPOSE? YOU AREN'T FULLY RECOVERED YET
AND YOU WOULD ONLY ATTRACT ATTENTION IF YOU TRIED TO SNOOP AROUND
?!

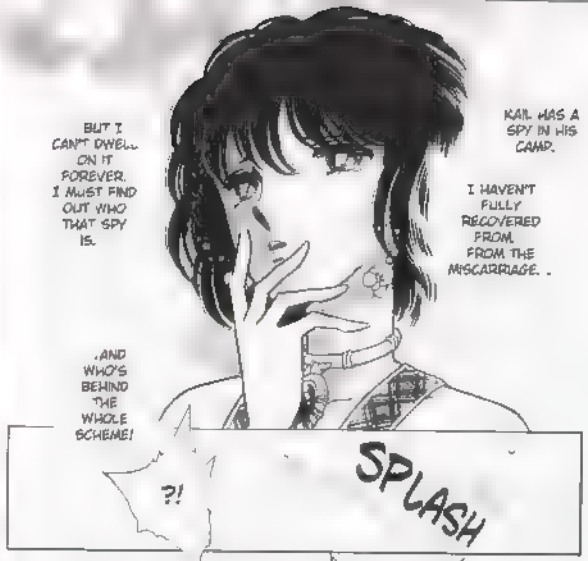

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE THAT A HIGH-RANKING EGYPTIAN MILITARY OFFICER LIKE YOU WOULD BETRAY HIS COUNTRY!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE DOING THIS!
RAMSES!
TOSS
SO PLEASE SEE TO HER EVERY NEED.
DID YOU CALL US, SIR?
YES. I WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER THIS WOMAN SHE'S MY SPECIAL GUEST
chu
AND TRY TO GET SOME REST WHILE I'M GONE.
YURI..
LEAVE THIS MATTER TO ME.
GLARE
AS YOU SAY SIR.

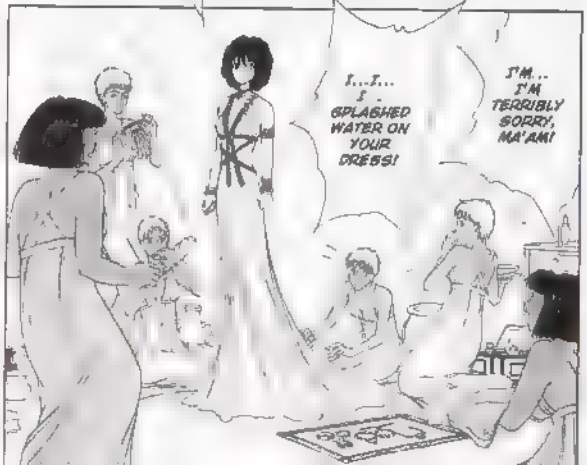

YOURS FOR THE MOMENT
AND ONLY FOR A VERY SPECIFIC PURPOSE
MY SWORD!
I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO LIFT YURI'S SPIRITS, BUT
I'M WORRIED SHE'LL STILL TRY TO GO TO THE PALACE.
I'LL PROTECT HER, YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT!
ALSO, TRUST NO ONE HERE..
I WANT YOU TO WATCH HER. STOP HER, IF NEEDED.
AND I MEAN NO ONE, UNDERSTAND?


?!
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT
WHY THE FUSS? IT'S JUST WATER.
P PLEASE FORGIVE ME!
THIS. THIS GIRL JUST JOINED US RECENTLY SHE ISN'T.


THEN. HOW MANY DAYS MUST I GO WITHOUT FOOD?
HUH? WHY DO YOU ASK?
WHIPPED? NO, I DON'T!
HM. DON'T YOU WANT HER WHIPPED?

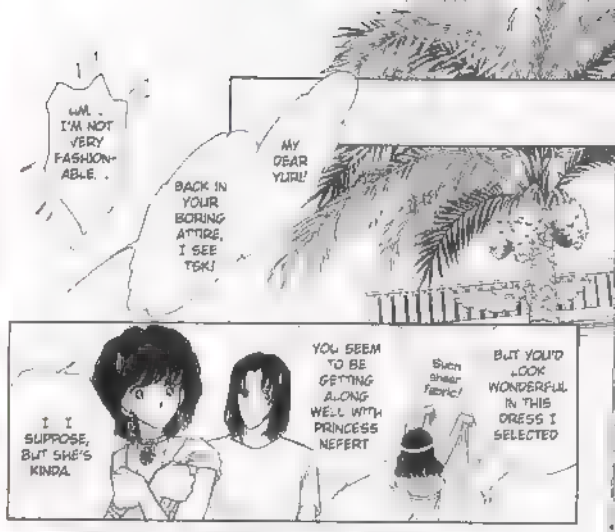

EXCUSE ME YOU ARE. ?
YOU ARE VERY UNUSUAL
AN ARISTOCRATIC WOMAN IS USUALLY MORE SEVERE WITH HER SERVANTS.


BUT I CAN'T DWELL ON IT FOREVER. I MUST FIND OUT WHO THAT SPY IS.
KAIL HAS A SPY IN HIS CAMP.
I HAVEN'T FULLY RECOVERED FROM. FROM THE MISCARRIAGE. .
.AND WHO'S BEHIND THE WHOLE SCHEME!
?!
SPLASH

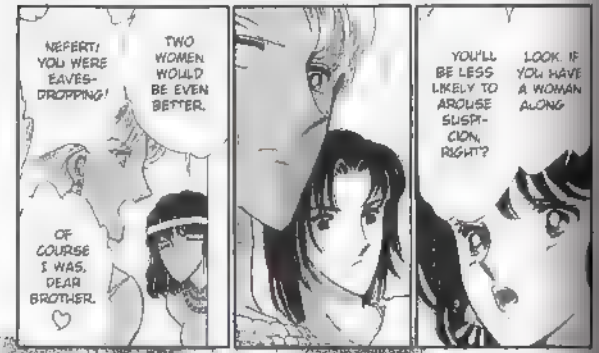

I...I... I SPLASHED WATER ON YOUR DRESS!
I'M... I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, MA'AM!

THEY'RE JUST ADORABLE! ♡
SWUFF
OH MY!
OOOOO
OOOOO
OOOOO
OH, DON'T BE A PRUDE, DEAR! ♡
THEY'LL DO NO SUCH THING!
THEY DEFINITELY MUST GO ON DISPLAY!
SOMEWHAT SMALL BUT NICELY SHAPED!
SO.
WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU?
YOU AREN'T PARTICULARLY BEAUTIFUL OR VOLUPTUOUS, AND I DOUBT YOU'RE OF ROYAL LINEAGE
FRANKLY, I DON'T GET IT
STARE
STARE
STARE
HMM.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT MY BROTHER SEES IN YOU.
!!
ME? I'M HATHOR NEFERT
I CAME TO SEE THE WOMAN MY BIG BROTHER BROUGHT HOME
RAMSES' SISTER
EXCUSE ME?
Feels like ivory! ♡
OH, YOU HAVE SUCH SMOOTH SKIN!
WITH SUCH BEAUTIFUL SKIN, YOU SHOULD BARE YOUR BOSOM. THAT'S THE STYLE NOWADAYS.
THE BOSOM IS A POWERFUL ASSET FOR WOMEN.
W. WAIT WHAT'RE YOU DOING?

NO.
I DIDN'T, BUT
YOU'VE BEEN TO THEBES?
DID YOU FIND OUT WHO THE SPY IS?
I JUST GOT BACK FROM THEBES
NEFERT, WILL YOU PLEASE EXCUSE US?
OH. ALL RIGHT
RAMSES
. ONE OF MY MEN AT THE PALACE BROUGHT ME SOME INTERESTING INFORMATION
SEEMS THAT FOR THE LAST FEW MONTHS A HIGH-RANKING OFFICIAL HAS BEEN TRAVELING QUITE OFTEN BETWEEN BYBLOS AND THEBES
HE BEGAN THIS ACTIVITY AROUND THE SAME TIME THE INTELLIGENCE ABOUT MURSIL II STARTED BEING DISSEMINATED AT THE PALACE.


UM. I'M NOT VERY FASHION-ABLE. .
MY DEAR YURI!
BACK IN YOUR BORING ATTIRE, I SEE. TSK!
I I SUPPOSE, BUT SHE'S KINDA.
YOU SEEM TO BE GETTING ALONG WELL WITH PRINCESS NEFERT
Sweet Sheer Fabric!
BUT YOU'D LOOK WONDERFUL IN THIS DRESS I SELECTED
NOT EXACTLY
I IMAGINE HE'S STILL LOOKING INTO THE SPY BUSI-NESS.
I DON'T THINK HE IS BACK YET MA'AM.
HAVE YOU HEARD ANY-THING FROM RAMSES? HE'S BEEN GONE FOR SEVERAL DAYS
UM. NEVER MIND.

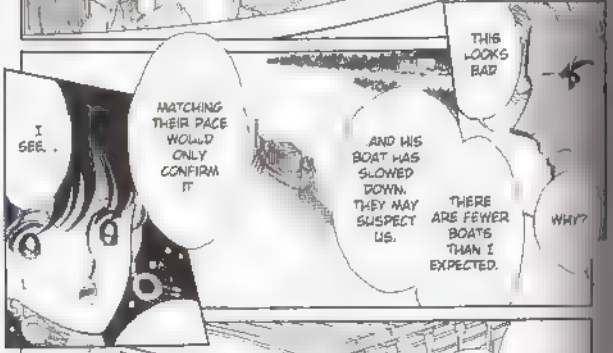
IF YOU THINK I'LL JUST SIT AROUND WHILE KAIL S IN DANGER.
I CAN HANDLE A BOAT TRIP RUSAFA.
PRINCESS YURI!
YOU HAVEN'T RECOVERED AND.


NEFERT! YOU WERE EAVES-DROPPING!
TWO WOMEN WOULD BE EVEN BETTER.
OF COURSE I WAS, DEAR BROTHER.
YOU'LL BE LESS LIKELY TO AROUSE SUSPI-CION, RIGHT?
LOOK. IF YOU HAVE A WOMAN ALONG

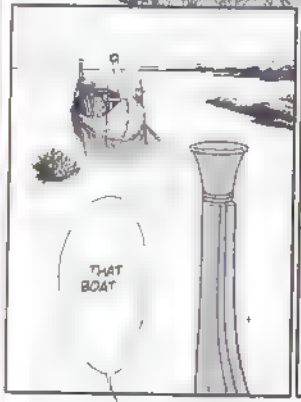
I'LL STOP THEM, AND MAKE THEM PAY!
THIS SPY, AND THE PERSON BEHIND IT ALL COULD WRECK EVEPY-THING!
WHAT AN AWFUL MESS!

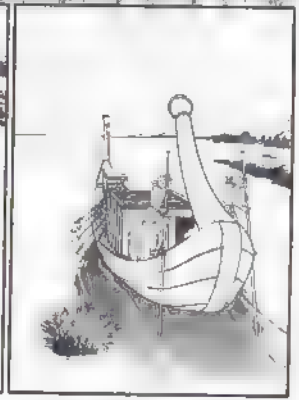
I'M. I'M GOING WITH YOU!
NO DOUBT HE TRAVELS BY THE NILE TO THEBES.
THE NILE BEARS A FAIRLY CONSTANT AMOUNT OF HEAVY TRAFFIC, SO
IT SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH TO FOLLOW HIM SURREPTI-TIOUSLY
DOES THAT MEAN HE'S THE SPY?!
NO, HE COULD NEVER GET CLOSE TO MURSIL! II.
I BELIEVE HE'S A RELAY MAN.
..PASSING INFORMA-TION FROM THE SPY
..TO THE MASTER-MIND OF THE OPERATION.

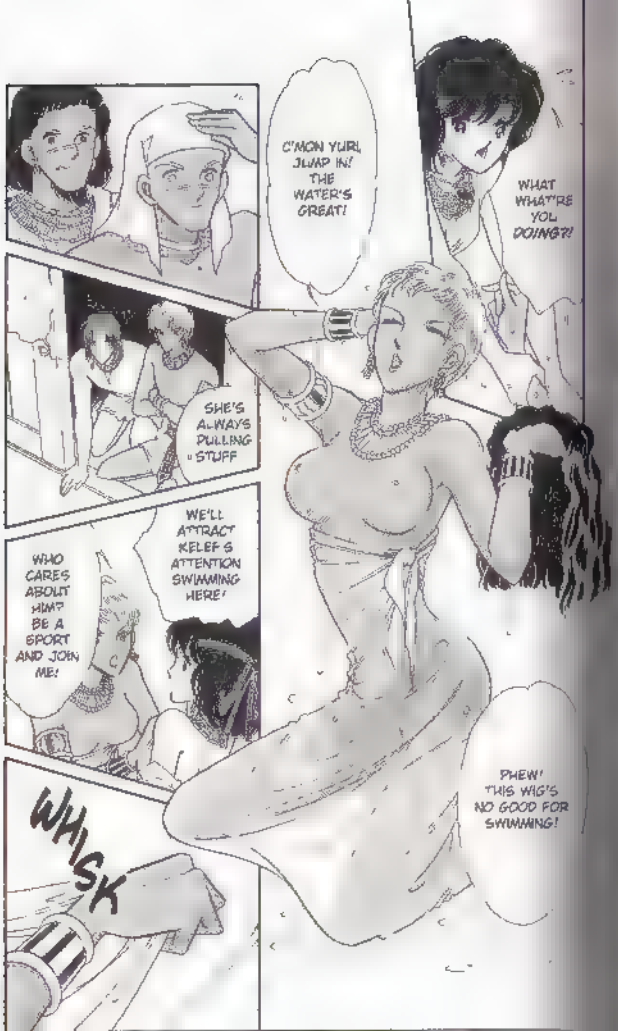
THE MAN'S NAME IS KELEF
UH-HUH.
IS IT THE ONE CARRYING THE OFFICIAL?


I SEE.
MATCHING THEIR PACE WOULD ONLY CONFIRM IT.
AND HIS BOAT HAS SLOWED DOWN. THEY MAY SUSPECT US.
THIS LOOKS BAD
THERE ARE FEWER BOATS THAN I EXPECTED.
WHY?

WHAT?!
A SUSPICIOUS BOAT HAS BEEN STAYING WITH US FOR SOME TIME.
SIR, I'VE SPOTTED WHAT MAY BE A TAIL.


THAT BOAT

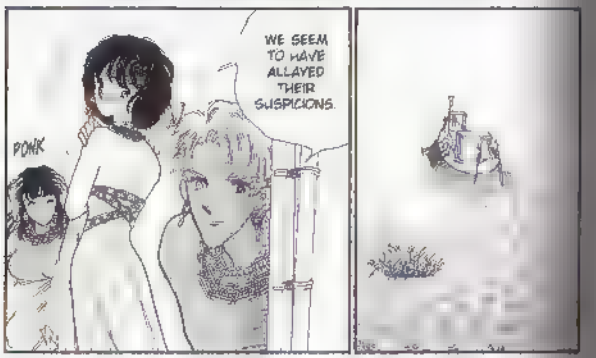


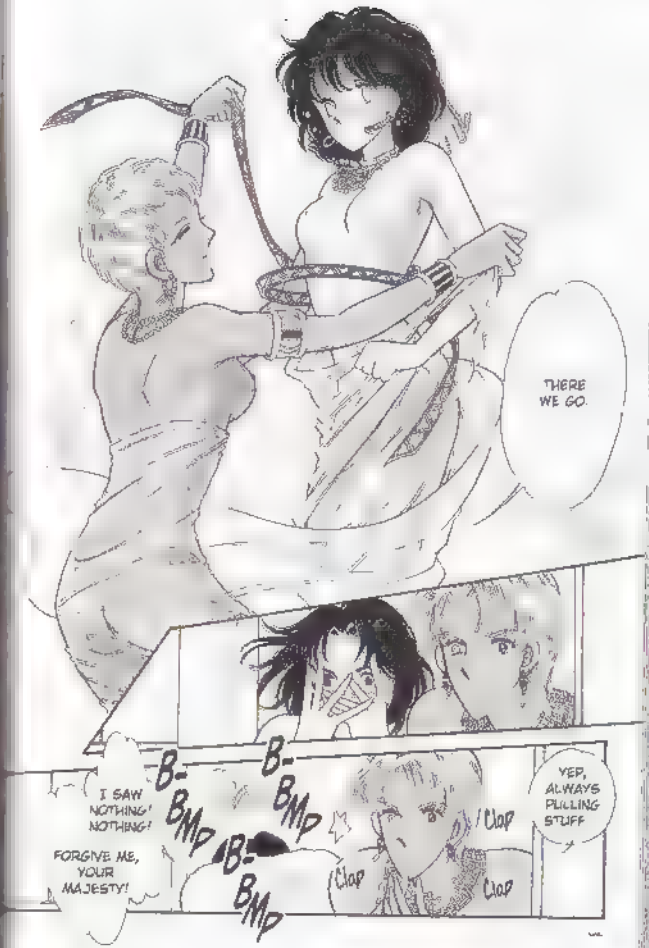

C'MON YURI, JUMP IN! THE WATER'S GREAT!
WHAT WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!
SHE'S ALWAYS PULLING STUFF
WE'LL ATTRACT KELEF'S ATTENTION SWIMMING HERE!
WHO CARES ABOUT HIM? BE A SPORT AND JOIN ME!
WHISK
PHEW! THIS WIG'S NO GOOD FOR SWIMMING!

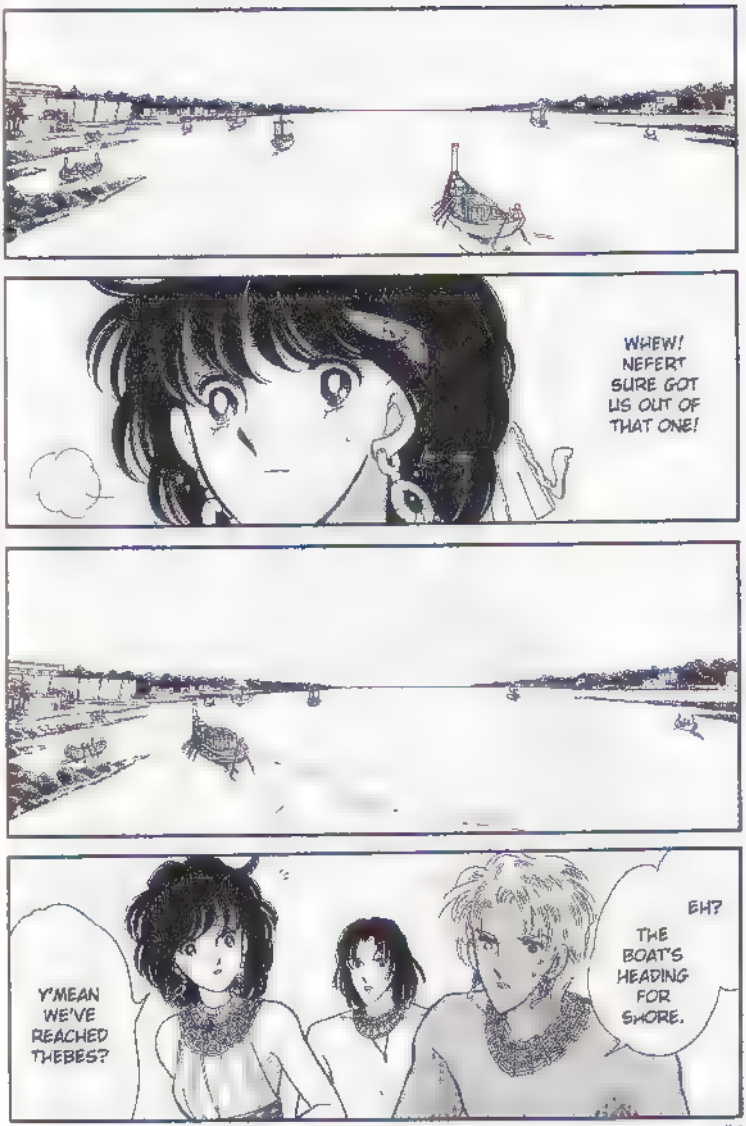
PRINCESS NEFERT?!
AH, REFRESHING! ♡
SPLOOSH
!!

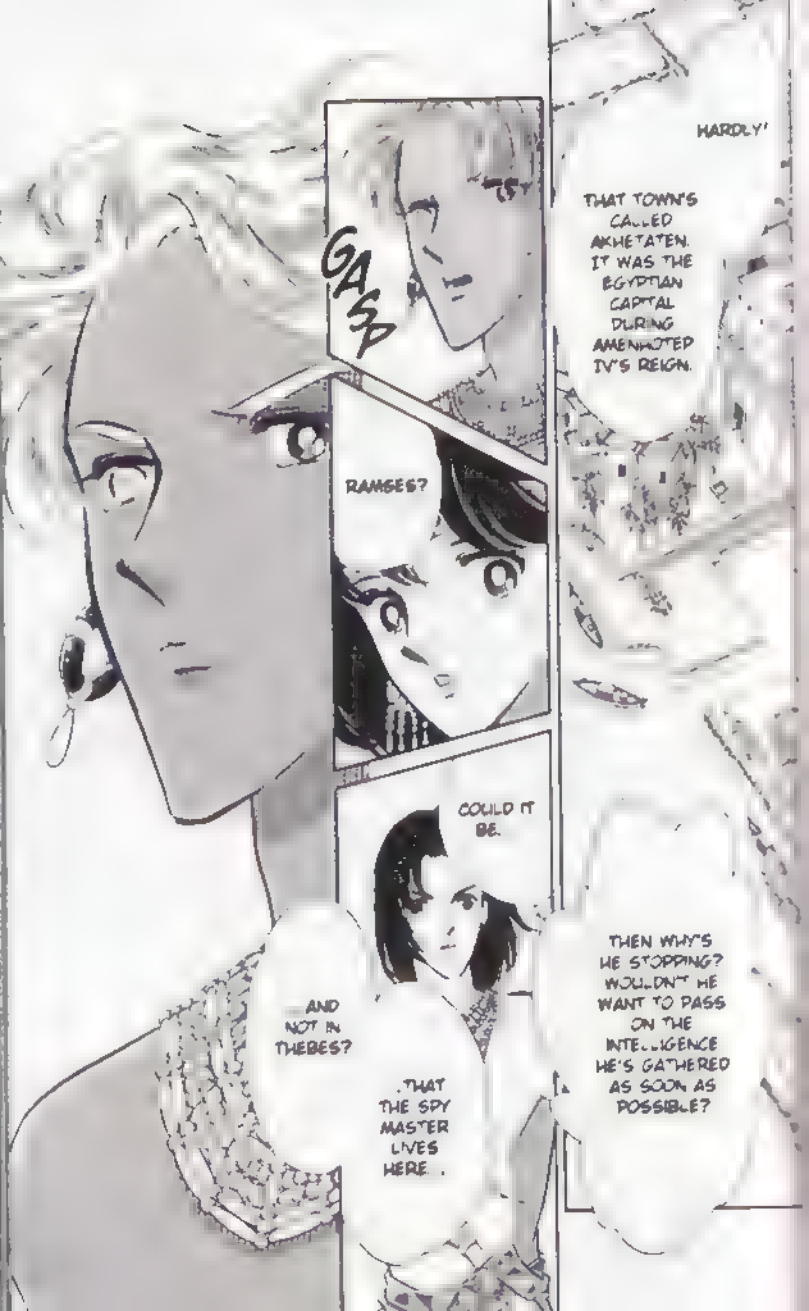
WHOOP
Oh, don't be a poop.
Gimme my clothes!
SHRIEK
HAH-YEE

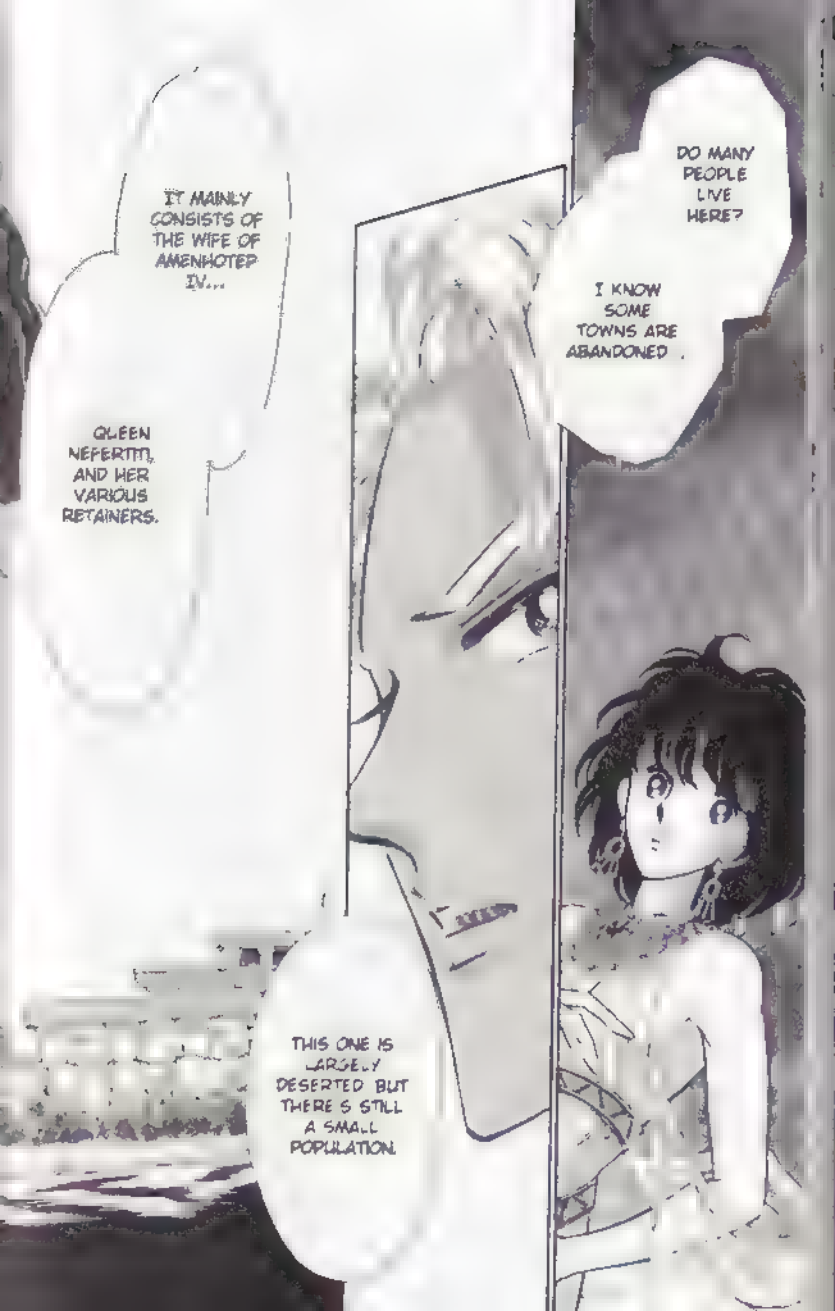
IGNORE THEM.
LET'S GO.
IT'S JUST SOME FOOLISH RICH GIRLS ON A PLEASURE CRUISE

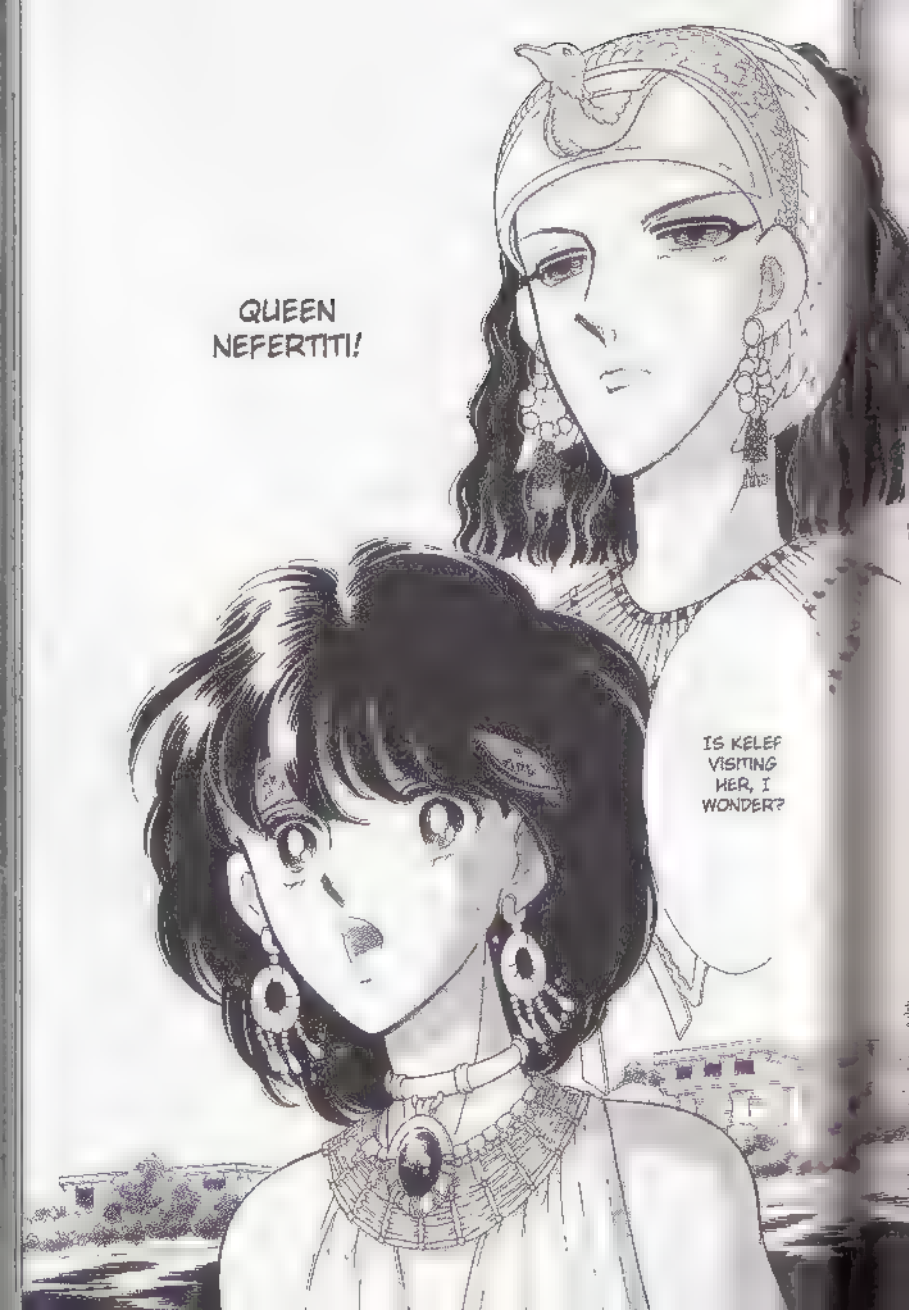

WE SEEM TO HAVE ALLAYED THEIR SUSPICIONS.
POWK

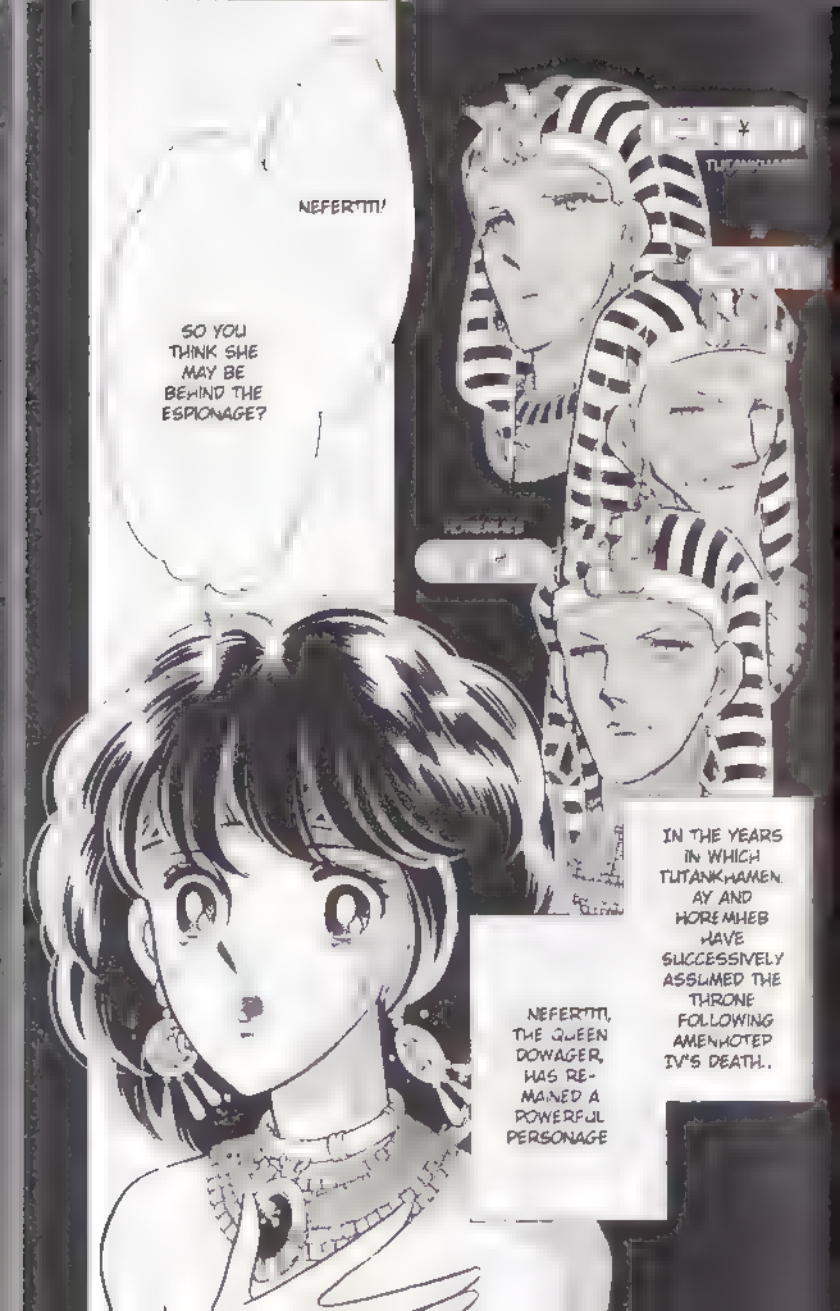

THERE WE GO.
B-BMP
B-BMP
B-BMP
I SAW NOTHING! NOTHING!
FORGIVE ME, YOUR MAJESTY!
Clap
Clap
Clap
YEP, ALWAYS PULLING STUFF

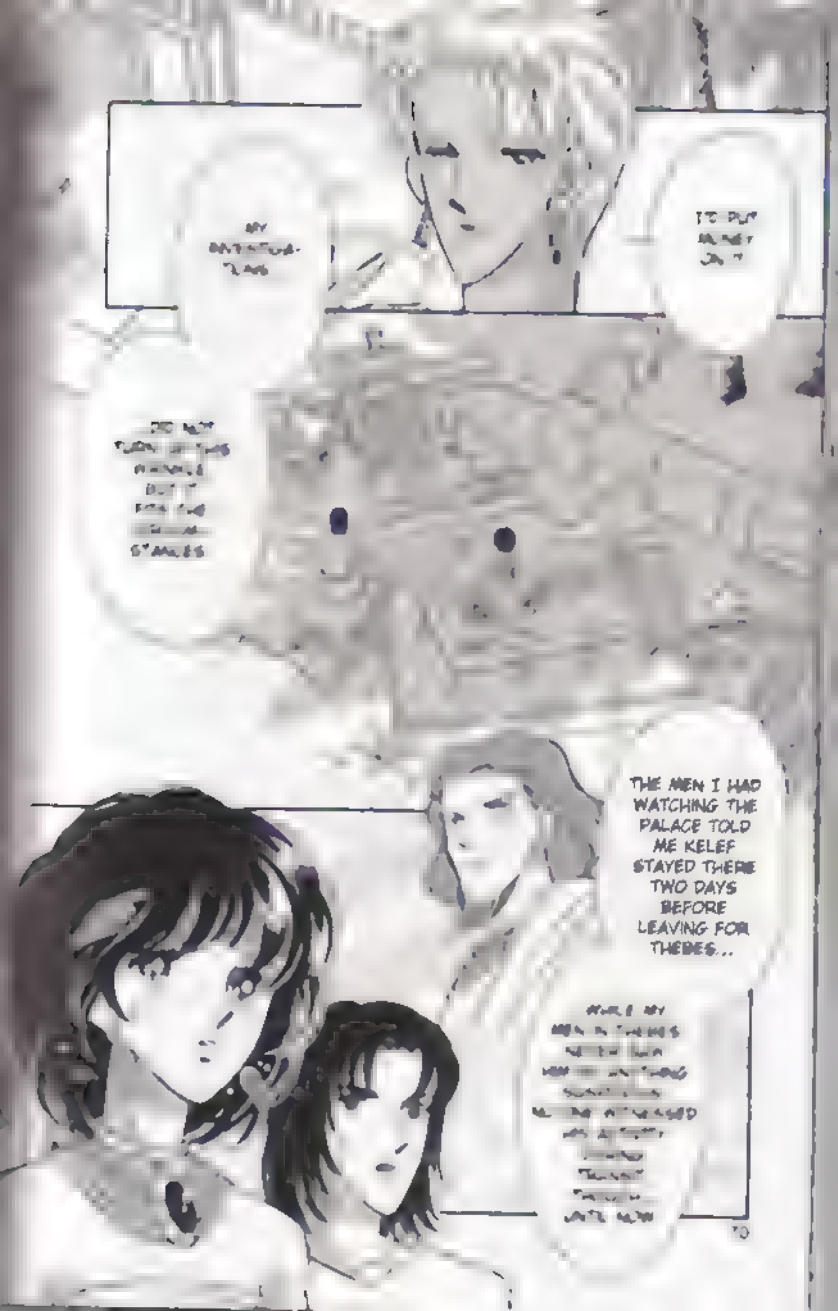

WHEW! NEFERT SURE GOT US OUT OF THAT ONE!
EH? THE BOAT'S HEADING FOR SHORE.
Y'MEAN WE'VE REACHED THEBES?


HARDLY!
THAT TOWN'S CALLED AKHETATEN. IT WAS THE EGYPTIAN CAPITAL DURING AMENHOTEP IV'S REIGN.
GASP
RAMSES?
COULD IT BE.
THEN WHY'S HE STOPPING? WOULDN'T HE WANT TO PASS ON THE INTELLIGENCE HE'S GATHERED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE?
...AND NOT IN THEBES?
...THAT THE SPY MASTER LIVES HERE.


DO MANY PEOPLE LIVE HERE?
I KNOW SOME TOWNS ARE ABANDONED.
THIS ONE IS LARGELY DESERTED BUT THERE'S STILL A SMALL POPULATION.
IT MAINLY CONSISTS OF THE WIFE OF AMENHOTEP IV...
QUEEN NEFERTITI, AND HER VARIOUS RETAINERS.


QUEEN NEFERTITI!
IS KELEF VISITING HER, I WONDER?

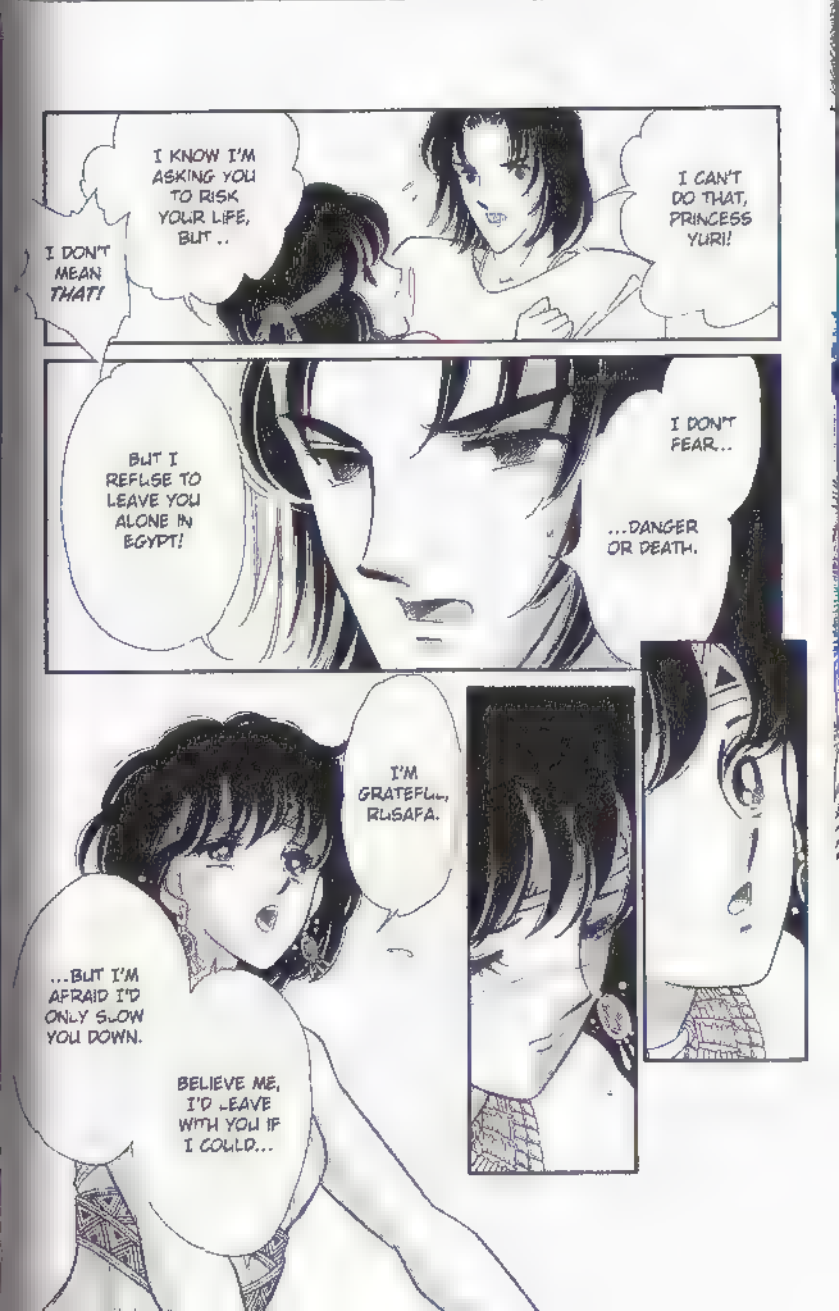

NEFERTITI!
SO YOU THINK SHE MAY BE BEHIND THE ESPIONAGE?
IN THE YEARS IN WHICH TUTANKHAMEN, AY AND HOREMHEB HAVE SUCCESSIVELY ASSUMED THE THRONE FOLLOWING AMENHOTEP IV'S DEATH..
NEFERTITI, THE QUEEN DOWAGER, HAS REMAINED A POWERFUL PERSONAGE

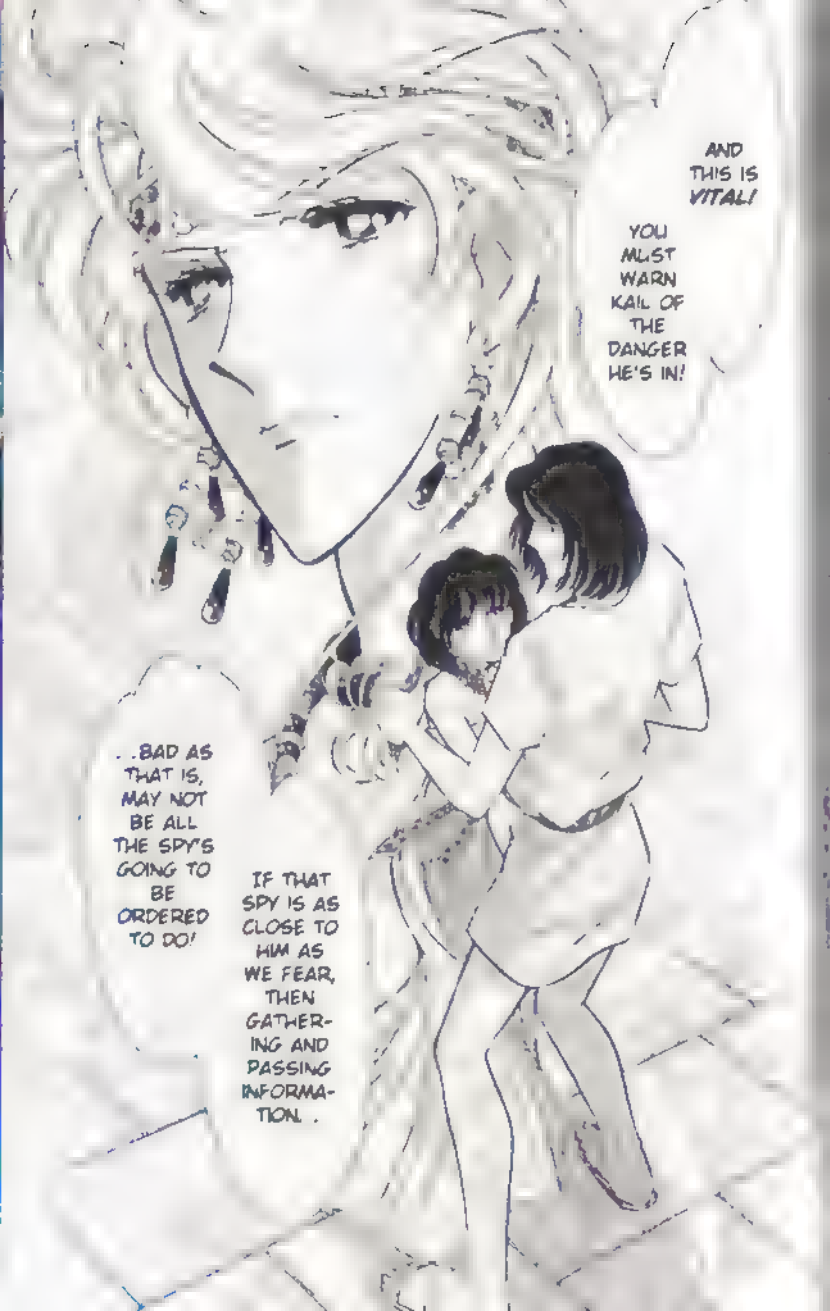

THE MEN I HAD WATCHING THE PALACE TOLD ME KELEF STAYED THERE TWO DAYS BEFORE LEAVING FOR THEBES...

IT SOUNDS LIKE..
...YOUR QUEEN DOWAGER IS AS MUCH INTO SCHEMES AND DIRTY DEALINGS AS OURS!
A FAIR ASSESS-MENT, I'D SAY.
RAMSES, I TRULY BELIEVE YOU MEAN TO APPREHEND WHOEVER IS BEHIND THE SPYING, BUT I JUST DON'T SEE HOW YOU CAN MANAGE IT!
THEN WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT?

RAMSES ?!
...
MEETING ?!
VERY WELL.
GENERAL, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR MEETING.
BUT IT MUST BE DONE .. SOMEHOW! OTHERWISE, KADESH AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE ARE DONE FOR!
NEFERTITI! EVEN RAMSES MUST QUAKE AT THE THOUGHT OF CONFRONTING HER!

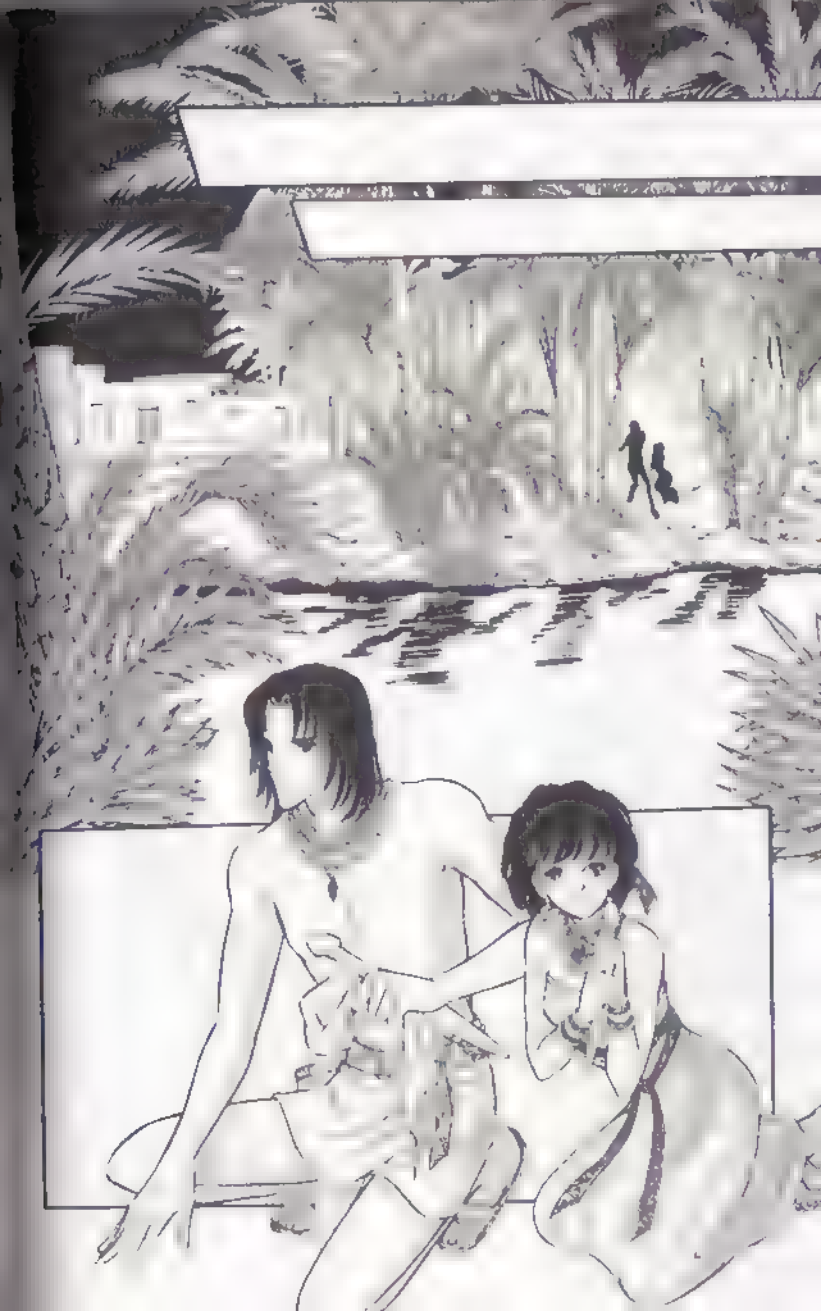
OF COURSE.
ASK WHATEVER YOU WILL
RUSAFA
WILL YOU DO ME A FAVOR?
...
?!
WHAT?
I WANT YOU TO ESCAPE FROM EGYPT.
YOU MUST INFORM KAIL OF WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TODAY.


I KNOW I'M ASKING YOU TO RISK YOUR LIFE, BUT ..
I DON'T MEAN THAT!
I CAN'T DO THAT, PRINCESS YURI!
BUT I REFUSE TO LEAVE YOU ALONE IN EGYPT!
I DON'T FEAR..
...DANGER OR DEATH.
I'M GRATEFUL, RUSAFA.
...BUT I'M AFRAID I'D ONLY SLOW YOU DOWN.
BELIEVE ME, I'D LEAVE WITH YOU IF I COULD...


AND THIS IS VITAL!
YOU MUST WARN KAIL OF THE DANGER HE'S IN!
..BAD AS THAT IS, MAY NOT BE ALL THE SPY'S GOING TO BE ORDERED TO DO!
IF THAT SPY IS AS CLOSE TO HIM AS WE FEAR, THEN GATHERING AND PASSING INFORMATION..

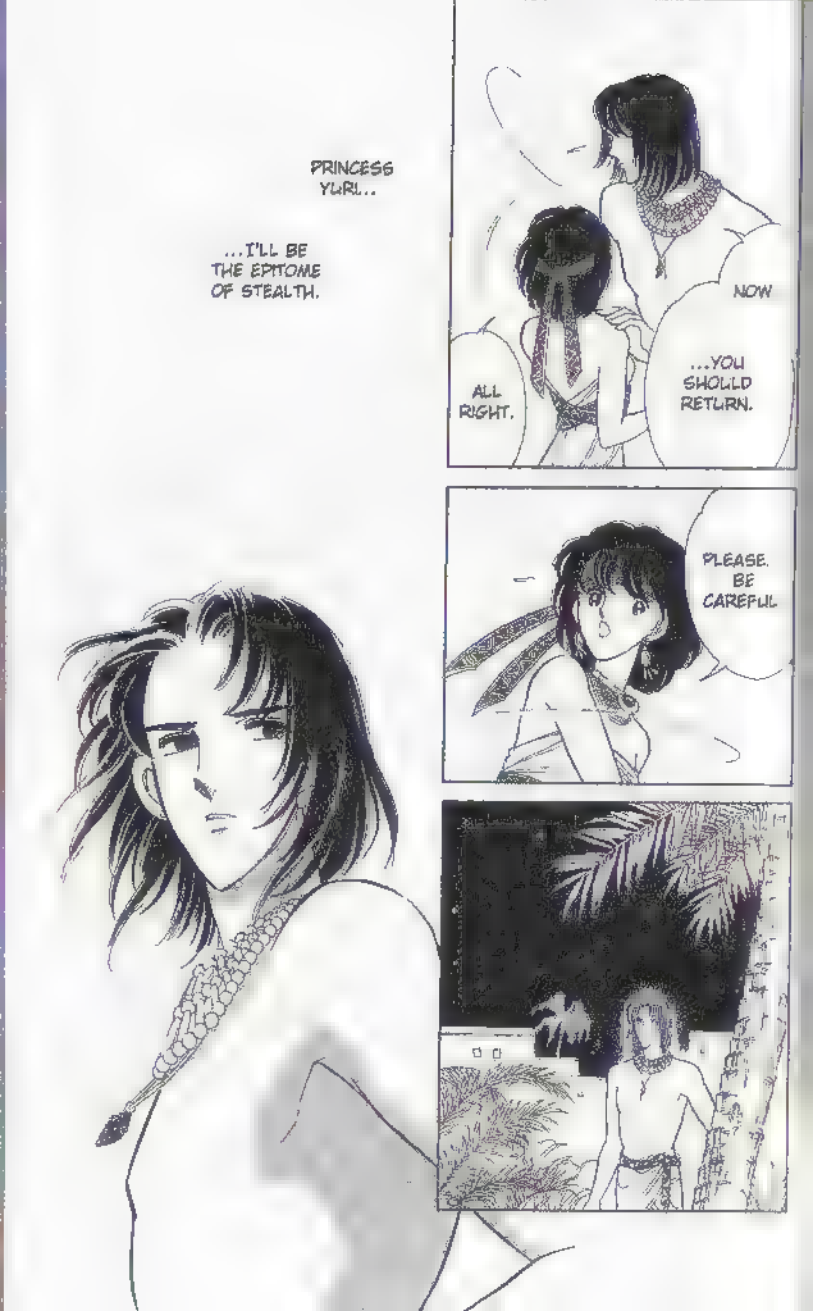
NO MORE, RUSAFA, PLEASE!
JUST DO THIS. I BEG YOU! IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO KAIL, I'LL HAVE NO REASON TO GO ON LIVING!
PRINCESS YURI..
I'LL BE FINE HERE.
YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT RAMSES WILL PROTECT ME.
AND IF PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, I DARN WELL KNOW HOW TO PROTECT MYSELF!

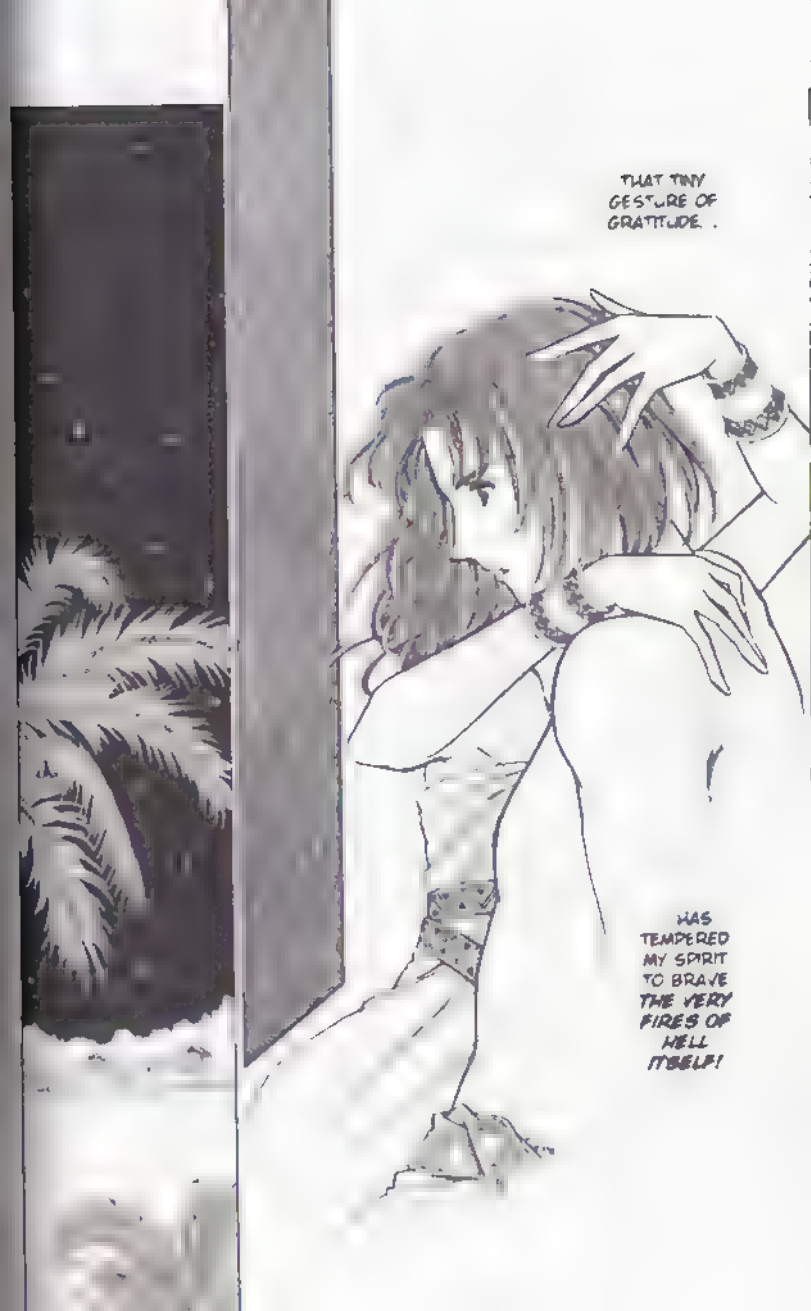
I'LL DO IT, PRINCESS YURI.
UPON MY LIFE, I WILL GET THIS WARNING TO HIS MAJESTY!



YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO STEAL A BOAT, OR...
I'LL FIND A WAY OUT
MY MAIDS TOLD ME IF YOU FOLLOW THIS CANAL...
YOU'LL SOON REACH THE NILE
NO. IT'LL BE EASIER FROM HERE ON IF I'M ALONE.
I SHOULD STAY WITH YOU, TO-
IT'S TIME YOU GOT BACK TO YOUR ROOMS.
YOU'LL HAVE TO COVER FOR ME AS LONG AS YOU CAN
!!

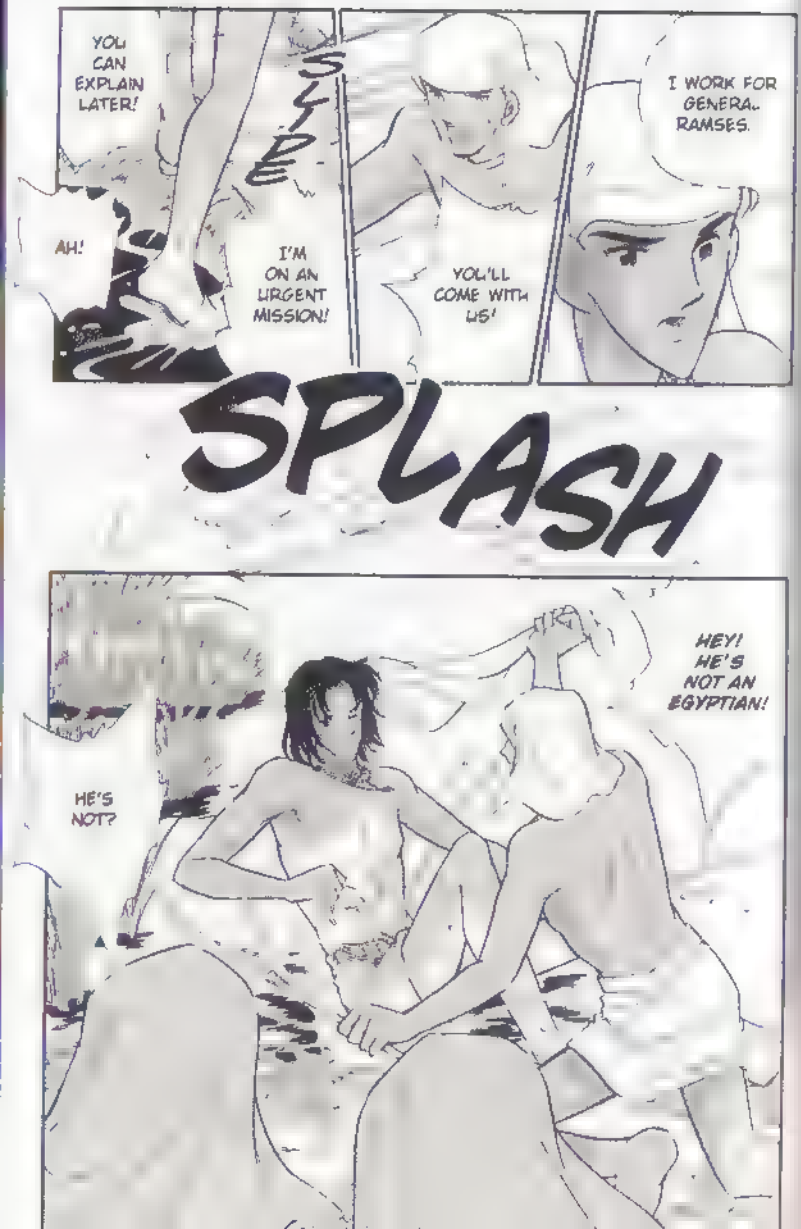
BWONG
...BEING AWARE YOU'D NEVER REFUSE ME...
THANK YOU, RUSAFA.
I KNOW I'VE ASKED YOU TO DO THIS...
THANK *YOU*, PRINCESS YURI.
YOU'VE VERY RIGHTLY SHOWN ME WHERE MY DUTY LIES.

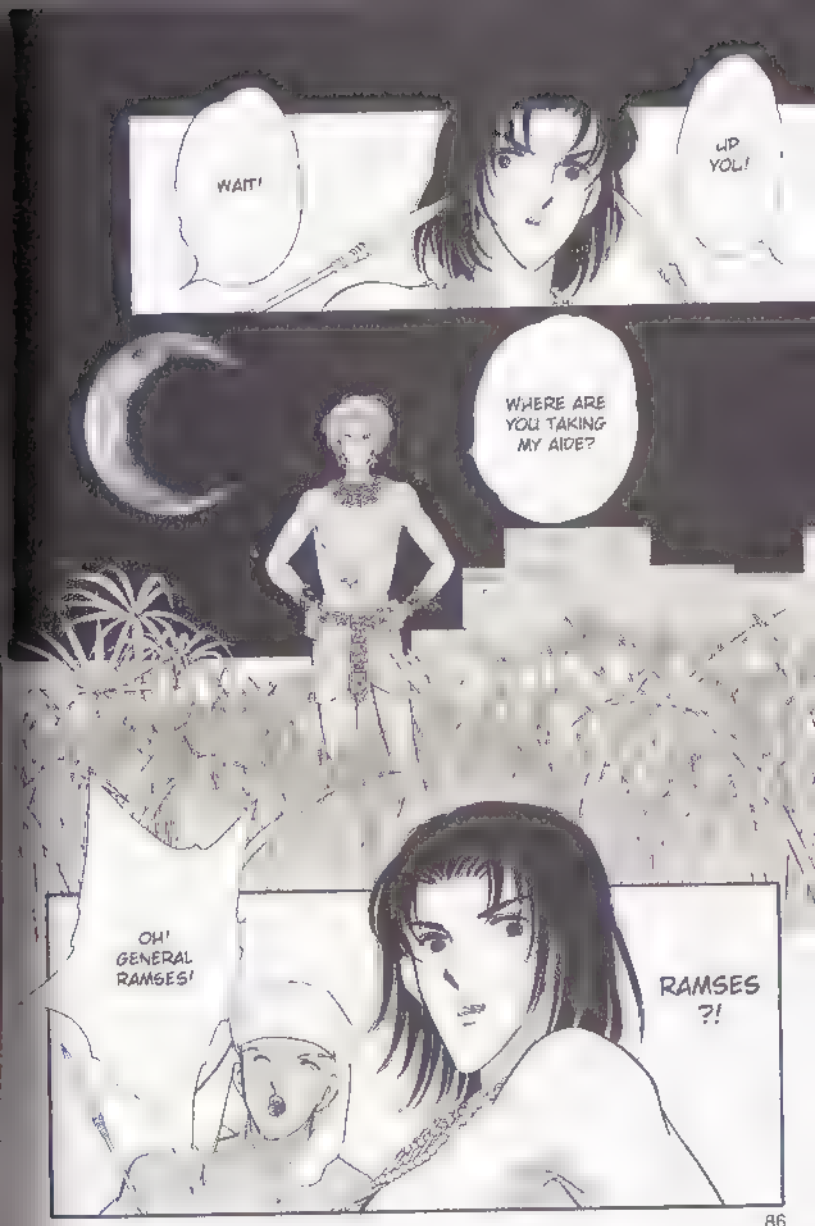

PRINCESS YURI...
...I'LL BE THE EPITOME OF STEALTH.
ALL RIGHT.
...YOU SHOULD RETURN.
NOW
PLEASE. BE CAREFUL


THAT TINY GESTURE OF GRATITUDE..
HAS TEMPERED MY SPIRIT TO BRAVE THE VERY FIRES OF HELL ITSELF!

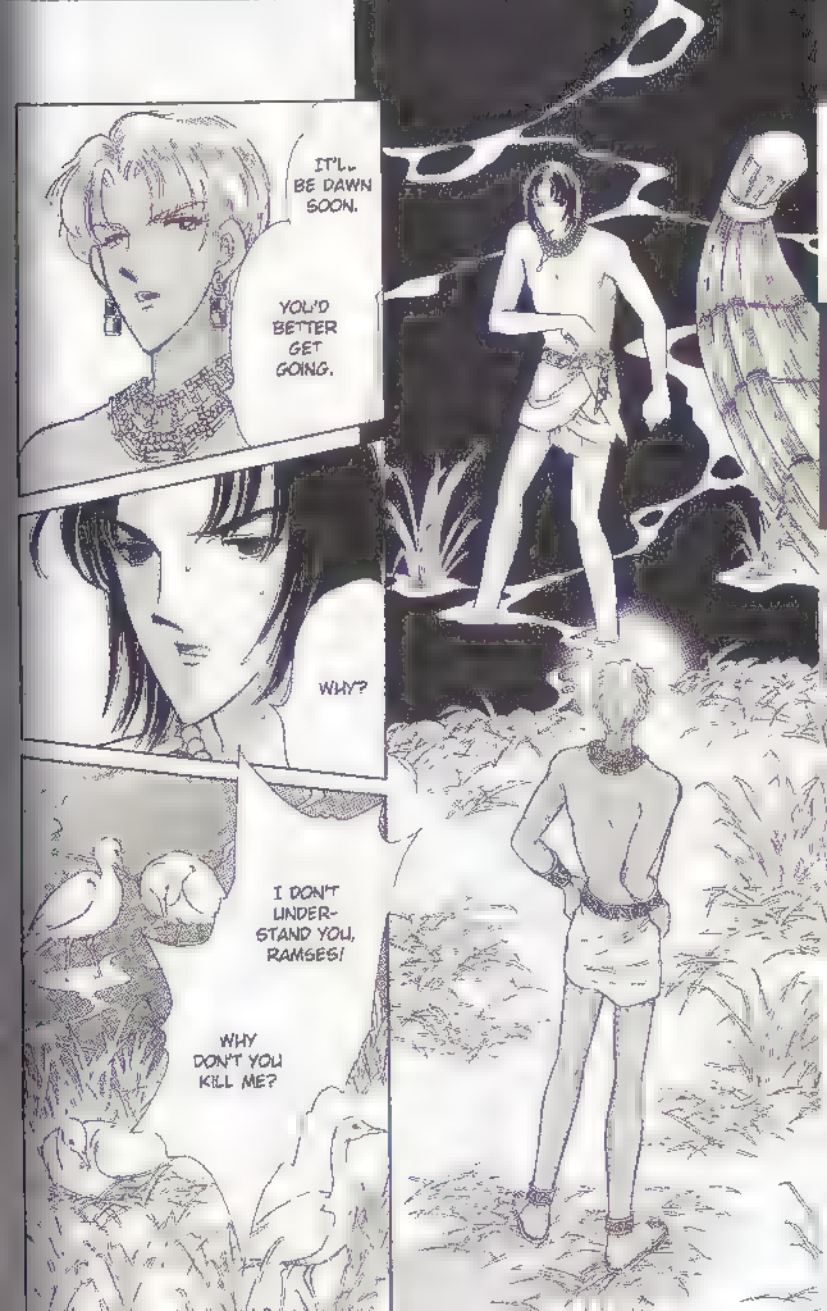
TOO MANY GUARDS FOR COMFORT
SCRUNCH

SCREECH
FLAP
FLAP
!!
!!
WHAT WAS THAT?
IS SOMEONE THERE?
WHAT'S YOUR UNIT?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
SOLDIER!

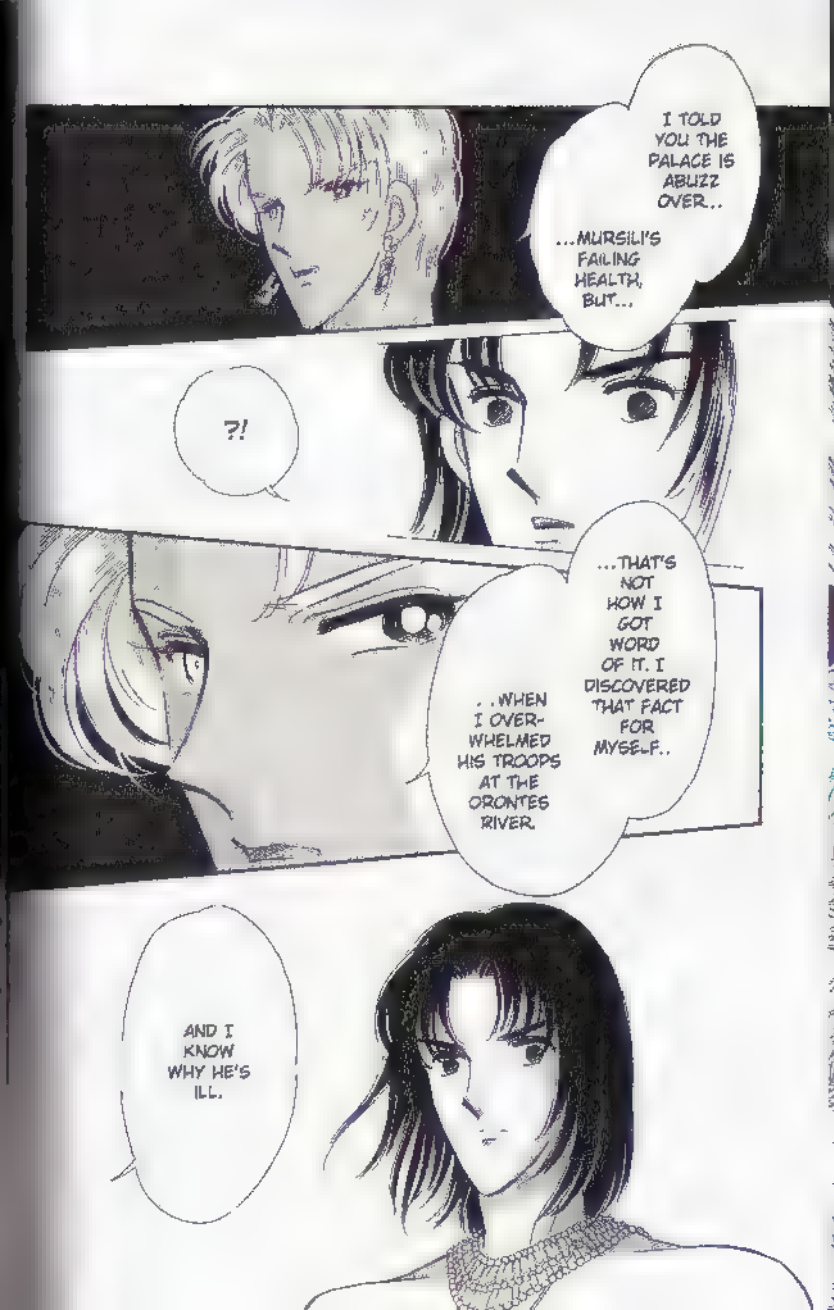

YOU CAN EXPLAIN LATER!
SLIP
I WORK FOR GENERAL RAMSES.
AH!
I'M ON AN URGENT MISSION!
YOU'LL COME WITH US!
SPLASH
HEY! HE'S NOT AN EGYPTIAN!
HE'S NOT?

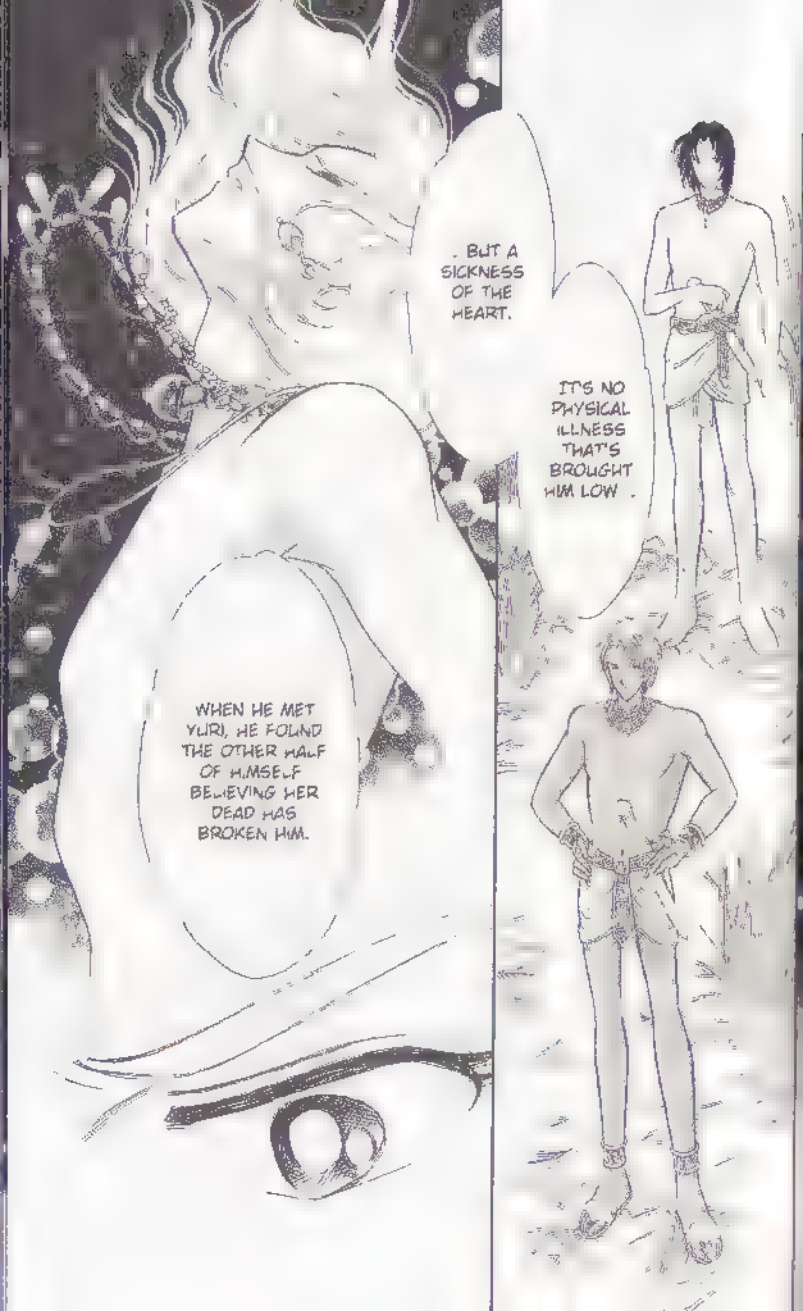

WAIT!
UP YOU!
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING MY AIDE?
OH! GENERAL RAMSES!
RAMSES ?!

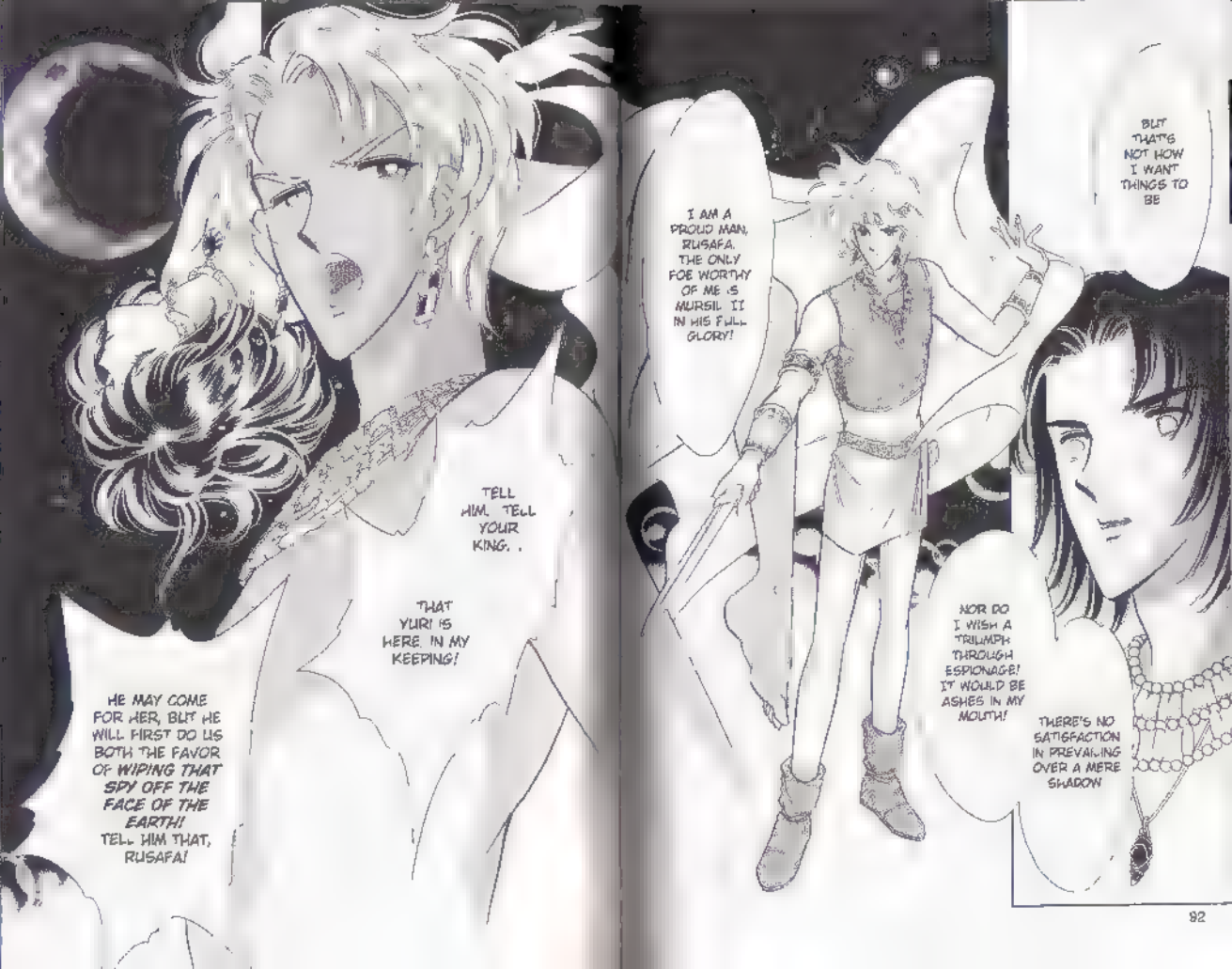
A MILITIAMAN FROM RHODES, TO BE EXACT
AND A FAR BETTER SOLDIER THAN YOU, IT SEEMS
HE'S YOUR AIDE
BUT... HE'S A FOREIGNER
I SUGGEST YOU GET BACK TO YOUR ROUNDS.
YES, YES. I KNOW
WE'RE JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS SIR!
Y... YES, SIR!
ON THE DOUBLE!
ONE WORD ABOUT THIS TO ANYONE AND YOU'RE FOR THE FRONT! GOT IT?


IT'L.. BE DAWN SOON.
YOU'D BETTER GET GOING.
WHY?
I DON'T UNDER-STAND YOU, RAMSES!
WHY DON'T YOU KILL ME?

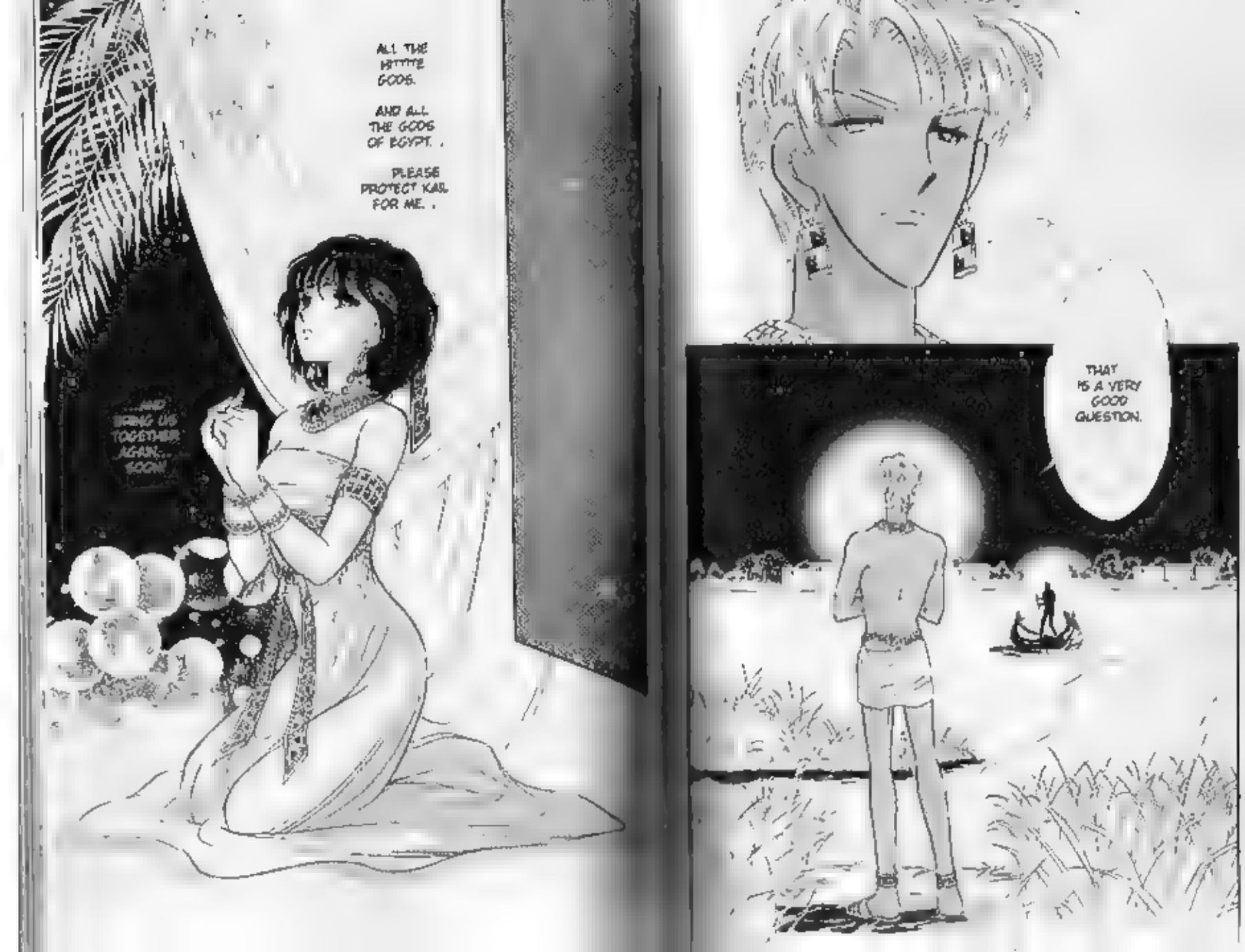
RUSAFA
POLITICS BREEDS A DREADFUL SORT OF HYPOCRISY IN THE BEST OF MEN.
AND I'M NO MORE THAN A MAN.
YOU'RE CAUGHT UP IN YOUR COUNTRY'S POWER STRUGGLES, AND I'LL WAGER SHE'S ONE OF YOUR MAN ADVERSARIES!
IS IT NEFERTITI? I SENSED YOUR DISDAIN FOR HER!
IF SHE HIRED THE SPY THAT'S AS MUCH A PROBLEM FOR YOU AS FOR THE HITTITES, ISN'T IT?

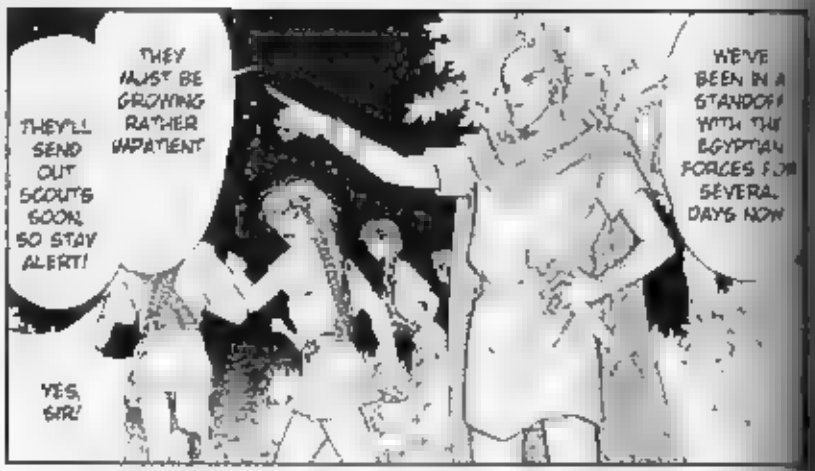

I TOLD YOU THE PALACE IS ABUZZ OVER..
...MURSILI'S FAILING HEALTH, BUT...
?!
...THAT'S NOT HOW I GOT WORD OF IT. I DISCOVERED THAT FACT FOR MYSELF..
..WHEN I OVERWHELMED HIS TROOPS AT THE ORONTES RIVER.
AND I KNOW WHY HE'S ILL.

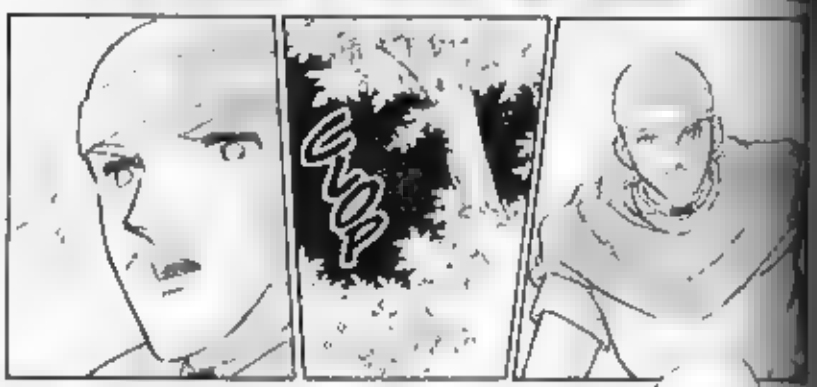

. BUT A SICKNESS OF THE HEART.
IT'S NO PHYSICAL ILLNESS THAT'S BROUGHT HIM LOW .
WHEN HE MET YURI, HE FOUND THE OTHER HALF OF HIMSELF BELIEVING HER DEAD HAS BROKEN HIM.


HE MAY COME FOR HER, BUT HE WILL FIRST DO US BOTH THE FAVOR OF *WIPING THAT SPY OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH!*
TELL HIM THAT, RUSAFA!
THAT YURI IS HERE. IN MY KEEPING!
TELL HIM. TELL YOUR KING. .
I AM A PROUD MAN, RUSAFA. THE ONLY FOE WORTHY OF ME IS MURSIL II IN HIS FULL GLORY!
BUT THAT'S NOT HOW I WANT THINGS TO BE
NOR DO I WISH A TRIUMPH THROUGH ESPIONAGE! IT WOULD BE ASHES IN MY MOUTH!
THERE'S NO SATISFACTION IN PREVAILING OVER A MERE SHADOW

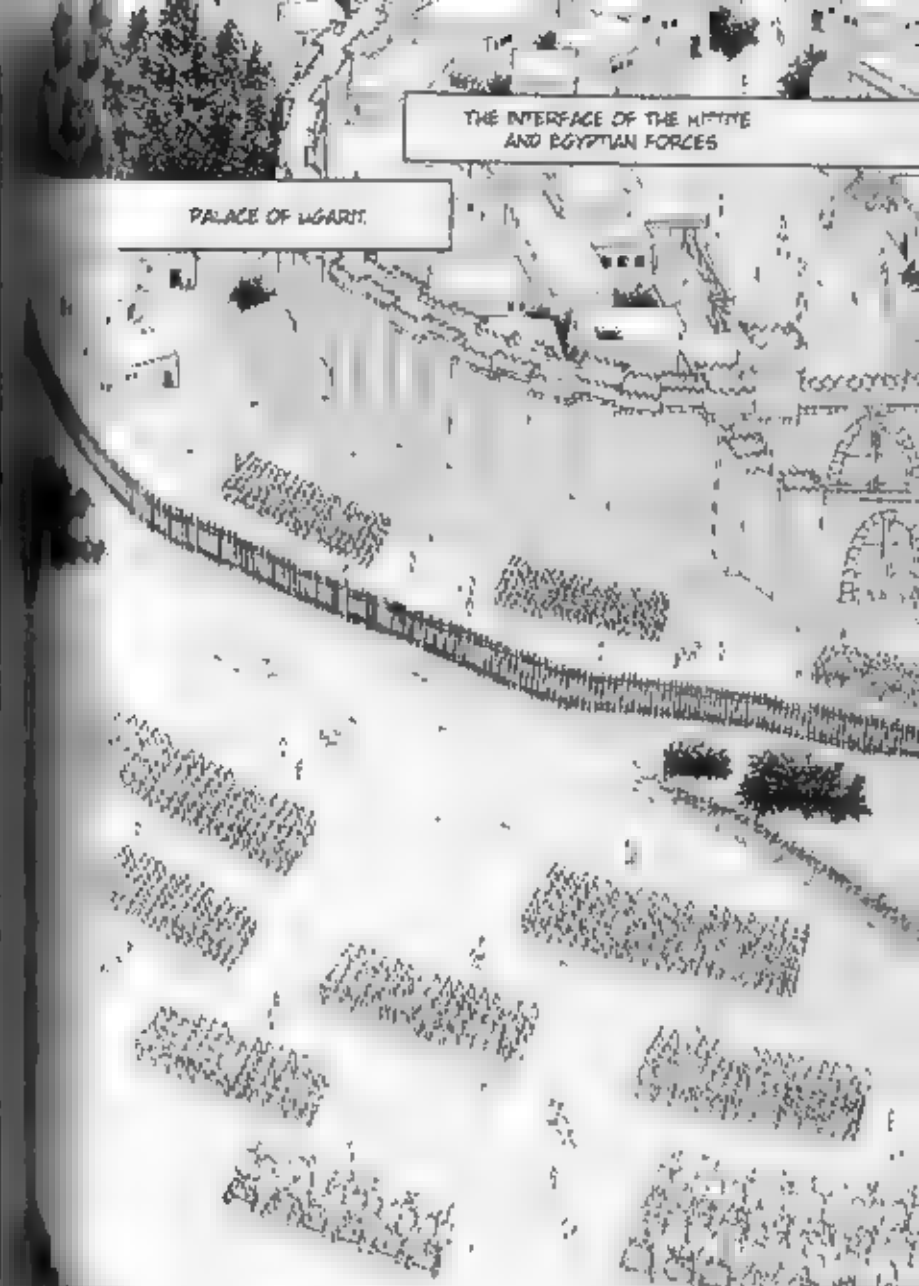
THE PURITY OF YOUR IDEALISM CANNOT ESCAPE THE HEAT OF YOUR AMBITION
WHAT SORT OF MAN WILL EMERGE FROM THE CRUCIBLE?
THUMP
EACH STRONG AND PROUD, EACH CAPABLE OF REALIZING HIS DREAMS.
RAMSES ...
YOU AND MY KING ARE MUCH ALIKE.
BUT I WARN YOU..
SHOVE


ALL THE HITTITE GODS.
AND ALL THE GODS OF EGYPT. .
PLEASE PROTECT KAIL FOR ME. .
...AND BRING US TOGETHER AGAIN... SOON!
THAT IS A VERY GOOD QUESTION.


THEY MUST BE GROWING RATHER IMPATIENT
THEY'LL SEND OUT SCOUTS SOON, SO STAY ALERT!
YES, SIR!
WE'VE BEEN IN A STANDOFF WITH THE EGYPTIAN FORCES FOR SEVERAL DAYS NOW


CLOP

CLOP
CLOP
HUH! THERE'S ONE ALREADY!


THE INTERFACE OF THE HITTITE AND EGYPTIAN FORCES
PALACE OF UGARIT

I KNOW BETTER THAN TO CROSS SWORDS WITH YOU
STOP !!! I WON'T FIGHT A...
...MITTAN-NANWA!
WHAT?!
RUSAFA!

SWAP
DON'T MOVE!
YOU MUST ALSO KNOW YOU WON'T BE LEAVING ALIVE!
YOU'RE VERY BOLD TO HAVE VENTURED THIS DEEP INTO OUR TERRITORY!!
W. WAIT!
THAT'S NOT AN OPTION!
WEIGHT

WHAT?!
WHAT'S THIS I HEAR?! RUSAFA'S BACK?!
RUB RUB
IS IT REALLY YOU?!
YEP! NO MISTAKING THAT GLARE!
I PROMISE I'LL EXPLAIN ALL
BUT RIGHT NOW I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE HIS MAJESTY!
NO LESS THAN HE'LL BE TO SEE YOU!

YOUR MAJESTY!
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GLAD I AM TO BE AT YOUR SERVICE ONCE AGAIN!
WELL, RUSAFA.
WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?!
AND MY APOLOGIES FOR MY HEADSTRONG ACTIONS OF LATE I KNOW I'VE
HOO
ARY
RUSAFA!
YOU, OLD BOW BENDER! IT IS YOU!
WELCOME BACK, RUSAFA!
RUSAFA!
WOW
BUT I MUST SEE HIS MAJESTY.
THIS IS SOME RECEPTION!
BRING THAT INSUBORDINATE SO-AND-SO TO ME AT ONCE!

WHERE
YURI IS WITH RAMSES?
WHERE IS PRINCESS YURI?
RUSAFA! WHERE IS SHE?
WE'LL GO FETCH HER AT ONCE!
. I SEE YOU'RE DRESSED LIKE RUSAFA AN EGYPTIAN. AM I TO PRESUME.
I WOULD NEVER REPROACH YOUR INSTINCTS, RUSAFA.
THANK YOU, SIR! AND I HAVE NEWS!
I'VE COME TO TELL YOU THAT
...YURI ISHTAR IS ALIVE AND DOING WELL!
YURI.
. IS ALIVE?!

MISCARRIAGE!
MY GOD.
BUT SHE'S ALIVE!
. HOW TERRIBLE THAT MUST'VE BEEN!
THAT IS CORRECT, SIR.
RUGAFA ?
AND THE BABY .. ?
PRINCESS YUKI.
. SUFFERED A MISCARRIAGE.
AFTER HER SHIP WENT DOWN

DAMNATION.
THAT SCOUNDREL KNOWS JUST HOW TO PULL MY STRINGS!
UNDER THE ABLE CARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GENERAL RAMSES.
I CAN ASSURE YOU PRINCESS YURI IS REGAINING HER HEALTH.
THE MESSAGE IS— "I'M KEEPING YOUR YURI WITH ME IF YOU WANT HER BACK, YOU MAY COME FOR HER AT YOUR PLEASURE."
THE GENERAL HIMSELF WAS ASKED.
THAT I DELIVER A MESSAGE TO YOU, SIR.
THAT IS ALL I HAVE TO REPORT SIR.

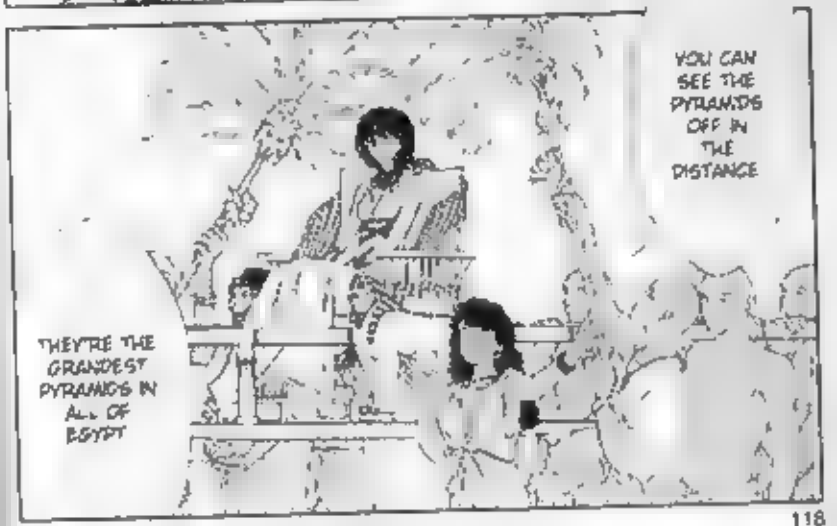
A MOMENT PLEASE, YOUR MAJESTY!
THERE'S ANOTHER MATTER THAT NEEDS YOUR ATTENTION!
WHAT IS IT?
YES, SIR!
WE'RE GOING TO BREAK KING HOREMHEB'S SIEGE!
CHARIO-TEERS! INFANTRY! ARCHERS!
PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

I HAVE LEARNED THAT.
. THERE IS A SPY AMONG YOUR AIDES, SIR.
GULP
. WE'RE ALONE WHAT IS THIS MATTER?
WOW.
PRIVATE?
IT'S PRIVATE, SIR.
EH. ?
THIS CAN'T BE SHARED WITH THEM?
EVERYONE HERE IS A TRUSTED AIDE OF MINE. AS YOU KNOW
NO, SIR.

ONE OF MY AIDES.
...IS A SPY? HOW HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
...I FELT WE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS IN PRIVATE, SIR.
THAT'S WHY.
GASP
A SPY?! YOU'RE KIDDING!
QUEEN NEFERTITI OF EGYPT IS AWARE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN IN POOR HEALTH OF LATE.
NO, SIR, I'M NOT
ONLY MY CLOSEST AIDES KNOW HOW I'VE BEEN.
WHAT?!

EGYPT

OVER THERE IS GIZA, MA'AM.


YOU CAN SEE THE PYRAMIDS OFF IN THE DISTANCE
THEY'RE THE GRANDEST PYRAMIDS IN ALL OF EGYPT

I APOLOGIZE FOR NOT NOTICING!
ARE YOU TIRED, MA'AM?
THAT'S ENOUGH SIGHTSEEING
I'D LIKE TO GO HOME NOW
WE'LL RETURN AT ONCE!

I'M PRETTY CERTAIN QUEEN NEFERTITI'S RUNNING THAT SHOW
I HAVE NO IDEA WHO THE SPY IS, BUT
IF ONLY I COULD HELP KAIL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF IT

PLEASE LIE DOWN, MA'AM.
WE'LL RUB SOME AROMATIC OIL ON YOU.
HUH?
QUEEN NEFERTITI CAN BE SEEN ONLY AT.
PUBLIC EVENTS, MA'AM.
IS THERE ANY WAY I CAN ARRANGE.
TO MEET QUEEN NEFERTITI?
WAIT, WAIT A SEC!
I REALLY DON'T NEED SUCH PAMPERING!
IT'S PART OF OUR JOB, MA'AM.
WE'LL GIVE YOU A THOROUGH MASSAGE
WHAT SMOOTH SKIN YOU HAVE, MA'AM.
SIGH.
EVEN IN EGYPT, I GET FAWNED OVER.

WELCOME HOME, MA'AM.
YOU MUST BE COVERED WITH SAND.
WE HAVE A BATH READY FOR YOU.
I'D LIKE TO SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT SORT OF PERSON SHE IS.
I WISH I COULD MEET NEFERTITI.

I'M NOT THE SORT OF WRETCH THAT WOULD FORCE HIMSELF ON AN ILL ING WOMAN.
QUIET!
THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK.
I'LL HOLD YOU LIKE THIS, SO I WON'T SEE YOUR BODY
AS FOR YOUR MODESTY
THEN BE A GENTLE-MAN AND. .
WAIT OUTSIDE WHILE I DRESS!
SQUEEZE
I DON'T THINK SO.
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED RUNNING MY FINGERS OVER IT
IT IS LOVELY SKIN, ISN'T IT
LEAVE US.
YES, SIR.
I JUST GOT BACK.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT RAMSES!
NO! LET ME GO!
THIS IS MY HOUSE ALL ROOMS ARE OPEN TO ME.
THIS IS MY ROOM!
HOW DARE YOU!

GASP
RUB
JUST A KISS. PAID IN ADVANCE
I'M SERIOUS.
OH, DON'T BE SILLY!
THAT'S ENOUGH! LET ME GO!
WRIGGLING. EH? NICE.
LET ME GO, YOU...CAD!
I HATE YOU!!
I UNDERSTAND YOU WANT TO MEET NEFERTITI.
I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP YOU THERE.
BUT WHAT WILL YOU ASK IN RETURN?
YOU CAN?!
...THE QUEEN CAN ONLY BE SEEN AT PUBLIC EVENTS.
I CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT
REALLY? I HEARD

I'LL ASK YOU TO JOIN ME IN MY BED AFTER YOU'VE MET WITH NEFERTITI.
THERE. WAS THAT SO TOUGH?
SLAP
YOU GOT YOUR KISS, RAMSES.
SO JUST SEE THAT YOU ARRANGE THAT MEETING, AS AGREED!

CONGRATULATIONS!
CONGRATULATIONS!
"CONGRATULATIONS"?
NOT "GOOD MORNING"?
HUH?
OH, MISS YURI!
CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'RE ALL UP SO EARLY
WHAT'S GOING ON?
OH YURI, YOU MUST BE THRILLED!
NEFERT?
GR
AB

EVEN IF HE WAS, HOW COULD HE DO IT?
WAS RAMSES REALLY SERIOUS ABOUT HELPING ME MEET QUEEN NEFERTITI?
PITTER-PATTER
PITTER-PATTER
PITTER-PATTER
?!
BUZZ
BUZZ

HEPERT!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
WHY'S EVERYONE SO BUSY THIS MORNING?
RAMSES IS GETTING MARRIED? WOW! WHO'S THE LUCKY BRIDE?
STOP TEASING! YOU KNOW HE'S MARRYING YOU! ♡
THERE'S LOTS TO BE DONE TO PREPARE FOR MY BROTHER'S WEDDING!
MY WHOLE FAMILY IS SO EXCITED ABOUT THIS! MY BROTHER'S NEVER SHOWED ANY INTEREST IN MARRIAGE BEFORE!
WE'RE JUST GIDDY WITH HAPPINESS!
A WEDDING FOR RAMSES.
AND YOU MADE IT ALL HAPPEN! CONGRATULATIONS!
...AND ME?!

BANG
RAMSES! I DEMAND AN EXPLANATION!
HE KNOWS I'LL NEVER MARRY HIM!
HELLO, YUSI.
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO SEND FOR YOU.
WHAT KIND OF JOKE IS THIS?!
BLAST IT, WE HAD A DEAL!
BUT INSTEAD OF ARRANGING A MEETING WITH QUEEN NEFERTITI, HE'S ARRANGING A WEDDING!

MOTHER, IF YOU WOULD EXCUSE US NOW?
CERTAINLY, CERTAINLY.
HE TOOK HIS FATHER'S PASSING HARD, AND I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED THAT HE WOULD LIVE OUT HIS LIFE AS A CONFIRMED BACHELOR
BUT NOW... OH, YOU CAN'T IMAGINE MY RELIEF!
OH MY, YOU'RE AS CHARMING AS MY SON SAID YOU WERE
CHARM IS SUCH A DESIRABLE QUALITY FOR THE WIFE OF A MILITARY OFFICER
GRAB
YURI, YOU'VE FILLED MY HEART WITH JOY! TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM!

WELL, THERE SEEMED NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT
HAHAHA
RANSES!
HOW CAN YOU DO THIS WITHOUT MY CONSENT?
LET ME INTRODUCE YOU.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT
BESIDES, I'M NOT AN ARISTOCRAT! WHAT WOULD YOUR FAMILY SAY?
JUST LIKE THAT, HUH? SOME NERVE!
OH YEAH?
TO MY MOTHER.
EXCUSE ME?!

WHEN SUCH A FAMILY HOSTS A WEDDING
.THE PHARAOH'S FAMILY MUST ATTEND
YOU SEE, IT'S POLITICALLY ESSENTIAL.
EVEN QUEEN NEFERTITI CAN'T STAY ALOOF.

K-CHK
WIPE THAT SMIRK OFF YOUR FACE!
YOU KNOW I'M NOT GOING TO MARRY YOU!
WELL.
.SEEMS YOU'LL HAVE NO PROBLEMS WITH YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW
YOU THINK THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE?!
IT WAS JUST A TRICK TO FORCE ME INTO THIS. YOU'RE DESPICABLE!
OURS IS A MOST DISTINGUISHED FAMILY..
I WAS A FOOL TO TRUST YOU WHEN YOU SAID YOU'D HELP ME MEET THE QUEEN

I WANT YOU
..AS MY WIFE
NURSE. IT KEPT YOU AS HIS CONCUBINE
A CONCUBINE IS NOT A WIFE.
SHE IS, TO BE FRANK, A MISTRESS.
OF COURSE.
YOU MEAN
THE WEDDING IS A RUSE TO ARRANGE MY MEETING QUEEN NEFERTITI?
SQUEEZE
RAMSES..!
THOUGH THE WEDDING ITSELF IS NO RUSE!
GRAB

W. . WAIT!
DON'T.
GRAB
Y. . YOU'RE SERIOUS!
I WANT THERE TO BE NO QUESTION ABOUT WHAT YOU MEAN TO ME.

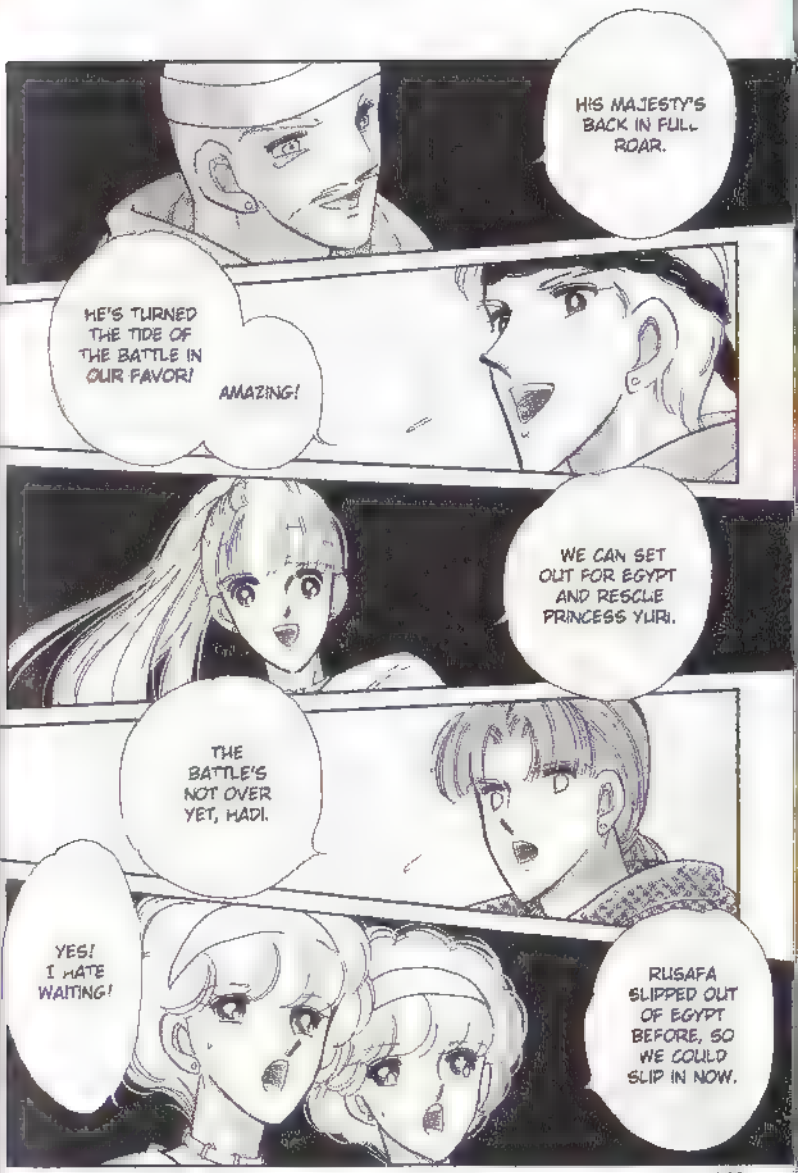
WHAT? WHY SHOULD I CARE THAT YOUR PHARAOH'S COMING TO OUR FAKE WEDDING?!
BE PLEASED BY THIS NEWS, YURI.
THAT CAN ONLY MEAN
THE PHARAOH HAS SEIZED ON A CONVENIENT EXCUSE TO LEAVE THE BATTLEFIELD.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT
KING HOREMHEB AND OUR FORCES.
HAVE BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF UGARIT BY THE HITTITES.

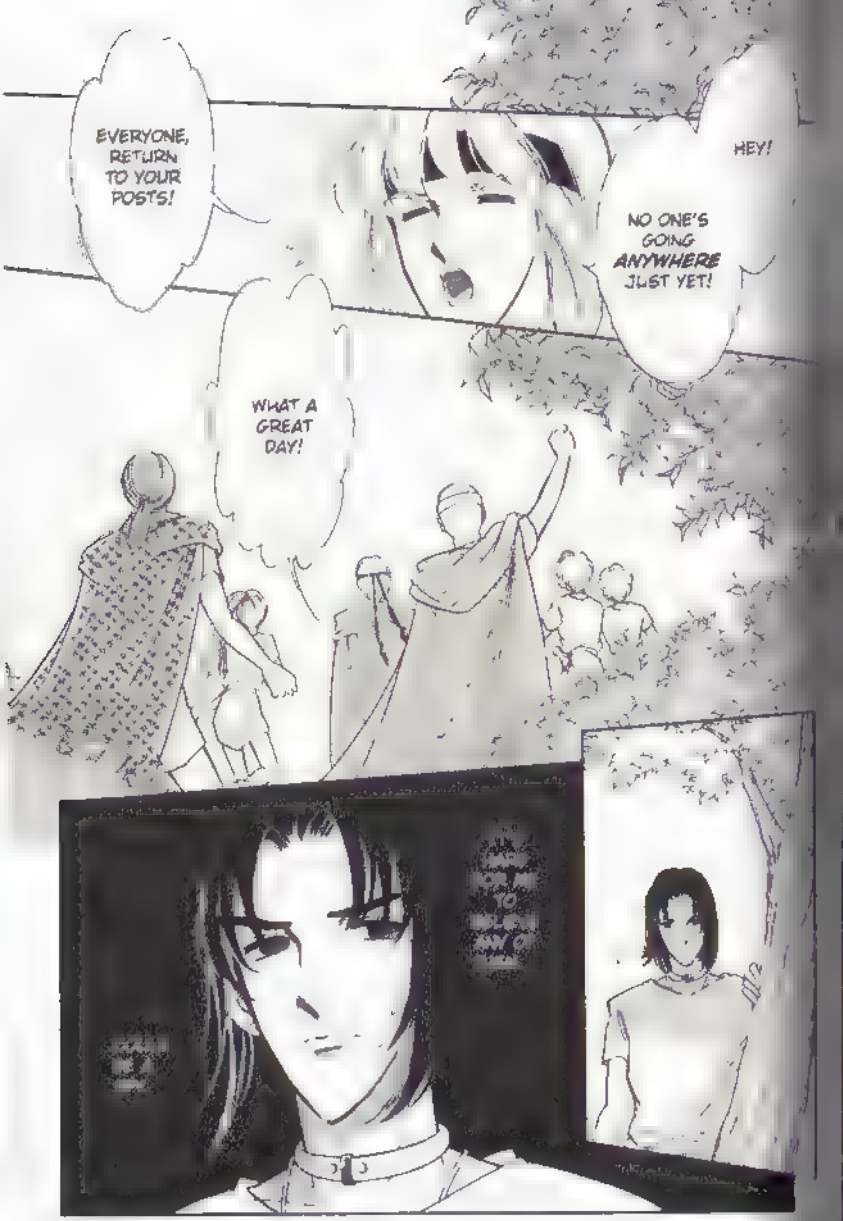
BIG NEWS
RAMSES!
I'VE GOT GREAT NEWS!
HE'S RETURNING FROM THE CAMPAIGN IN UGARIT TO ATTEND! ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?
THE PHARAOH WILL BE AT YOUR WEDDING!
OH, I MUST TELL MY MOTHER!
THINK OF THE HONOR!
YOU SHOULD REALLY
A WONDER THANK YOU

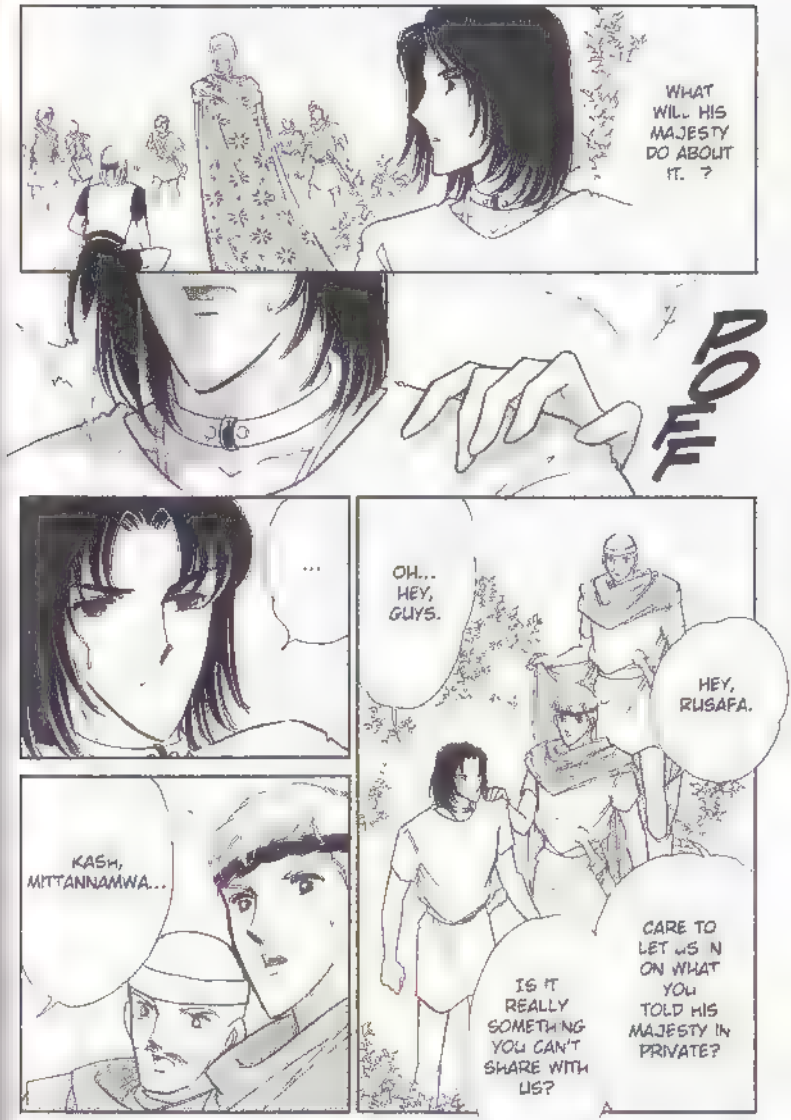
APPEARS TO HAVE PUT NURSE, ON THE ROAD TO A FULL RECOVERY
AND LEARNING THAT YOU ARE ALIVE.
I HAVE NO DOUBT RUSAFA FULFILLED HIS MISSION.
YOU! YOU REALLY THINK SO?!

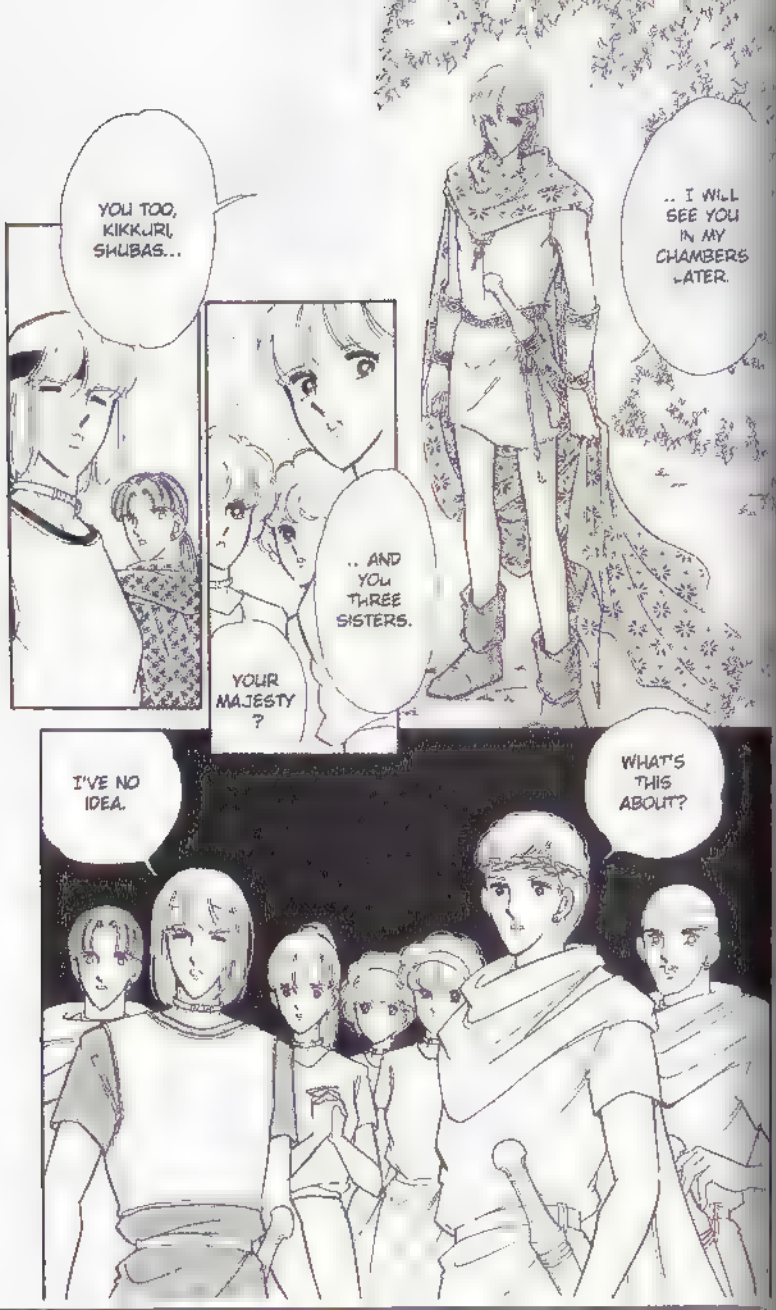
ROAR
WE'RE NOT DONE UNTIL WE'VE PUSHED THE EGYPTIANS BACK...
...AND REESTABLISHED THE DEFENSIVE LINE AT THE ORONTES RIVER!
KEEP ADVANCING, MEN!

ROAR
THE BORDER BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE HITTITE EMPIRE
THE SIEGE HAS BEEN BROKEN!
HURRAH! WE'VE DRIVEN OFF THE EGYPTIANS!

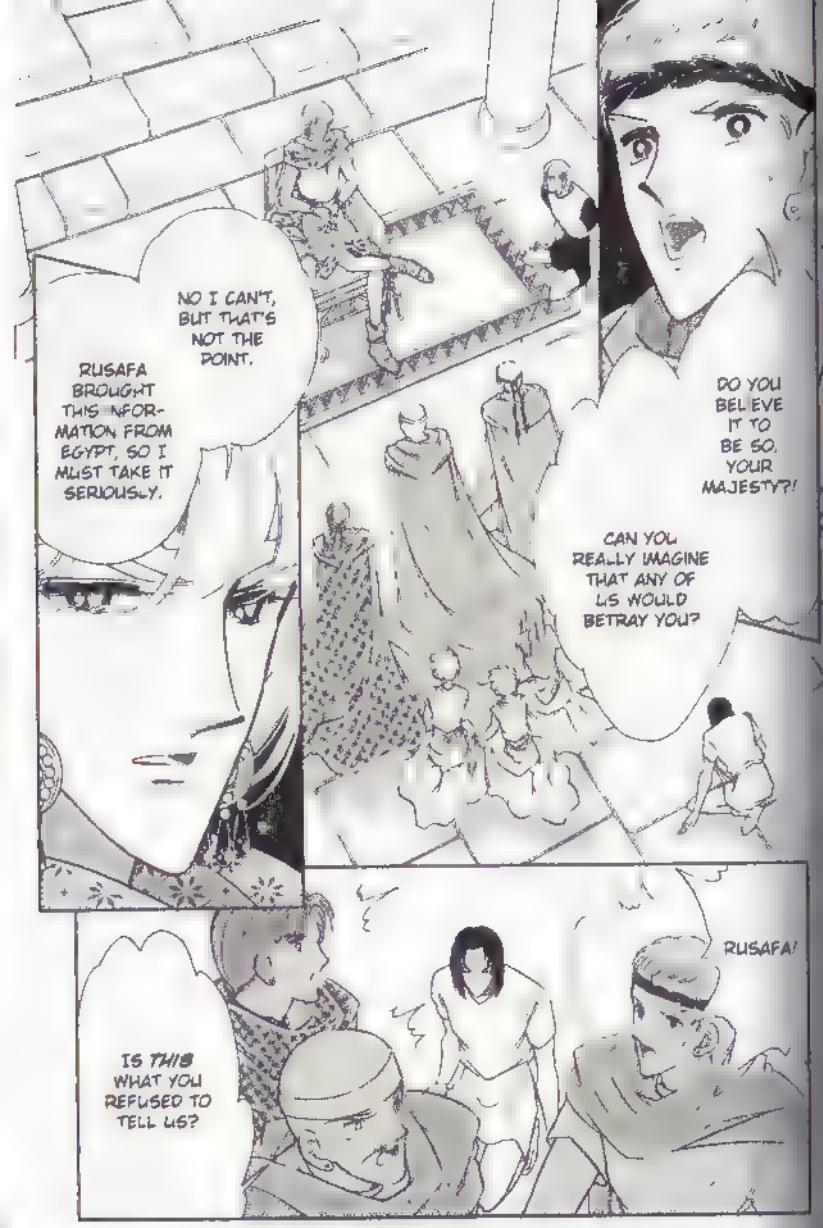

HIS MAJESTY'S BACK IN FULL ROAR.
HE'S TURNED THE TIDE OF THE BATTLE IN OUR FAVOR!
AMAZING!
WE CAN SET OUT FOR EGYPT AND RESCUE PRINCESS YURI.
THE BATTLE'S NOT OVER YET, HADI.
YES! I HATE WAITING!
RUSAFA SLIPPED OUT OF EGYPT BEFORE, SO WE COULD SLIP IN NOW.

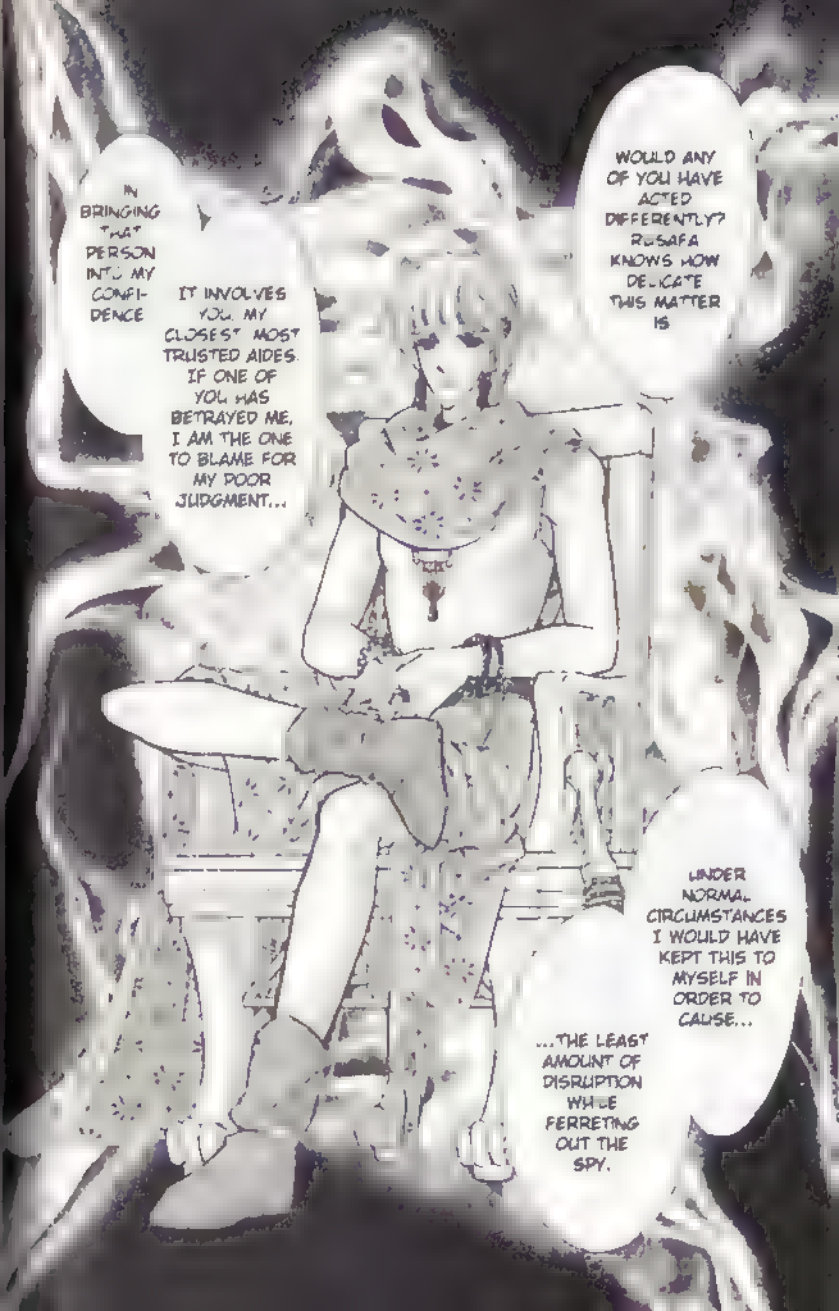

EVERYONE, RETURN TO YOUR POSTS!
HEY!
NO ONE'S GOING ANYWHERE JUST YET!
WHAT A GREAT DAY!

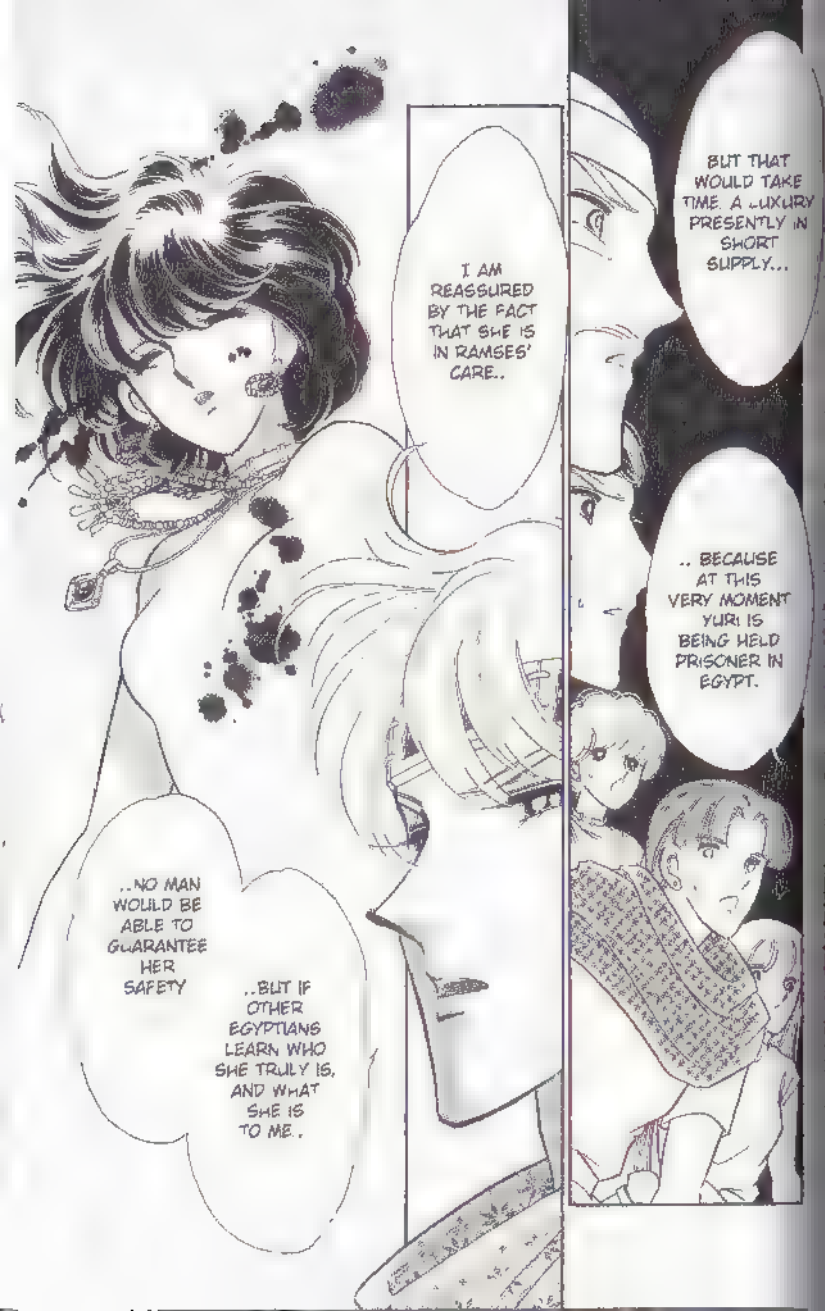

WHAT WILL HIS MAJESTY DO ABOUT IT. ?
POF
...
KASH, MITTANNAMWA...
OH... HEY, GUYS.
HEY, RUSAFA.
IS IT REALLY SOMETHING YOU CAN'T SHARE WITH US?
CARE TO LET US IN ON WHAT YOU TOLD HIS MAJESTY IN PRIVATE?

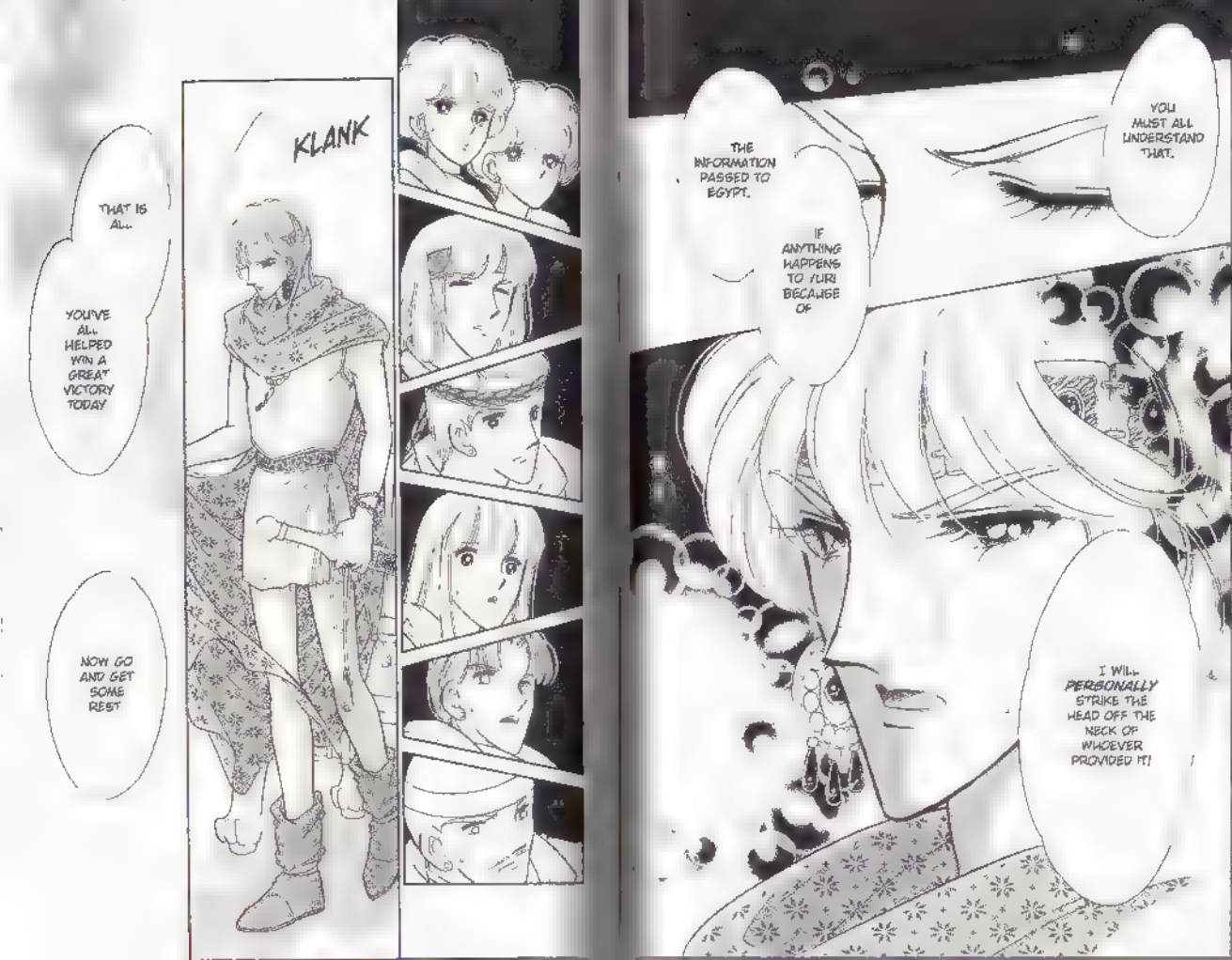

YOU TOO, KIKKURI, SHUBAS...
.. I WILL SEE YOU IN MY CHAMBERS LATER.
.. AND YOU THREE SISTERS.
YOUR MAJESTY ?
I'VE NO IDEA.
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

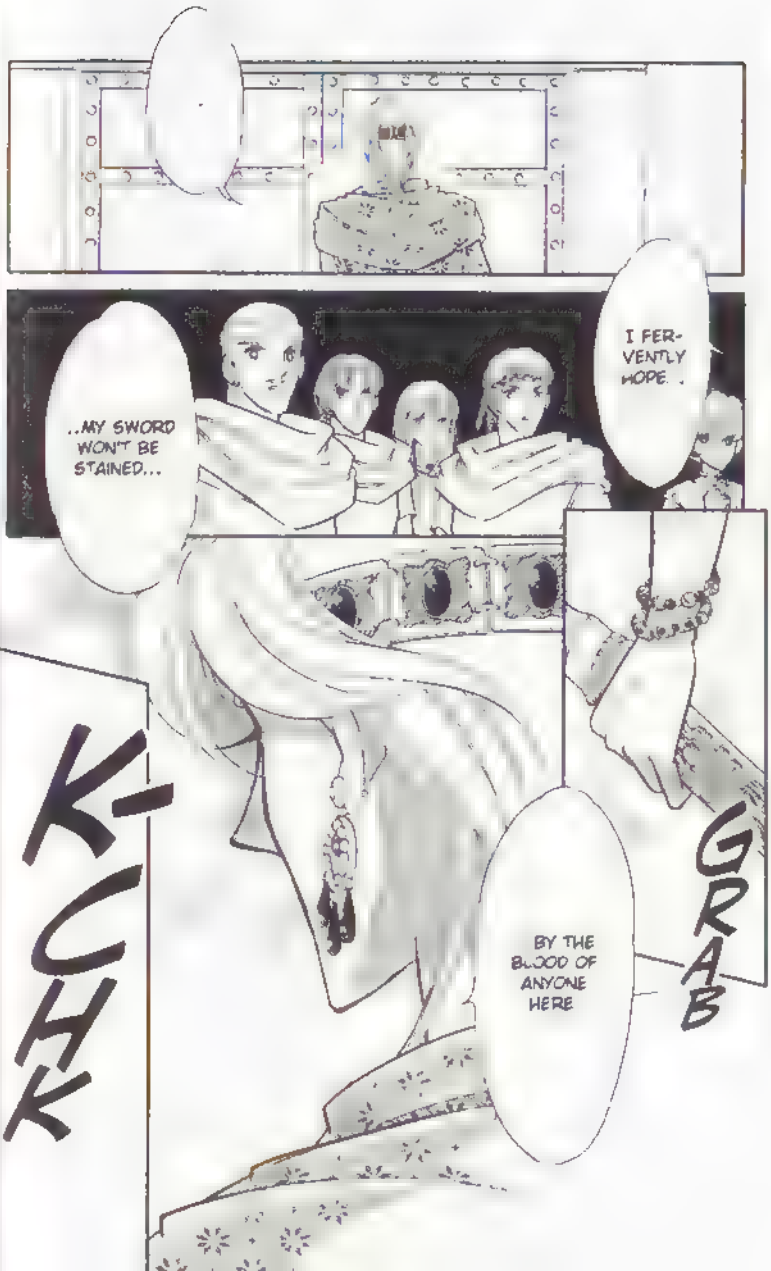
THIS IS INCREDIBLE!
SOMEONE AMONG US IS PROVIDING INTELLIGENCE TO THE EGYPTIANS?!

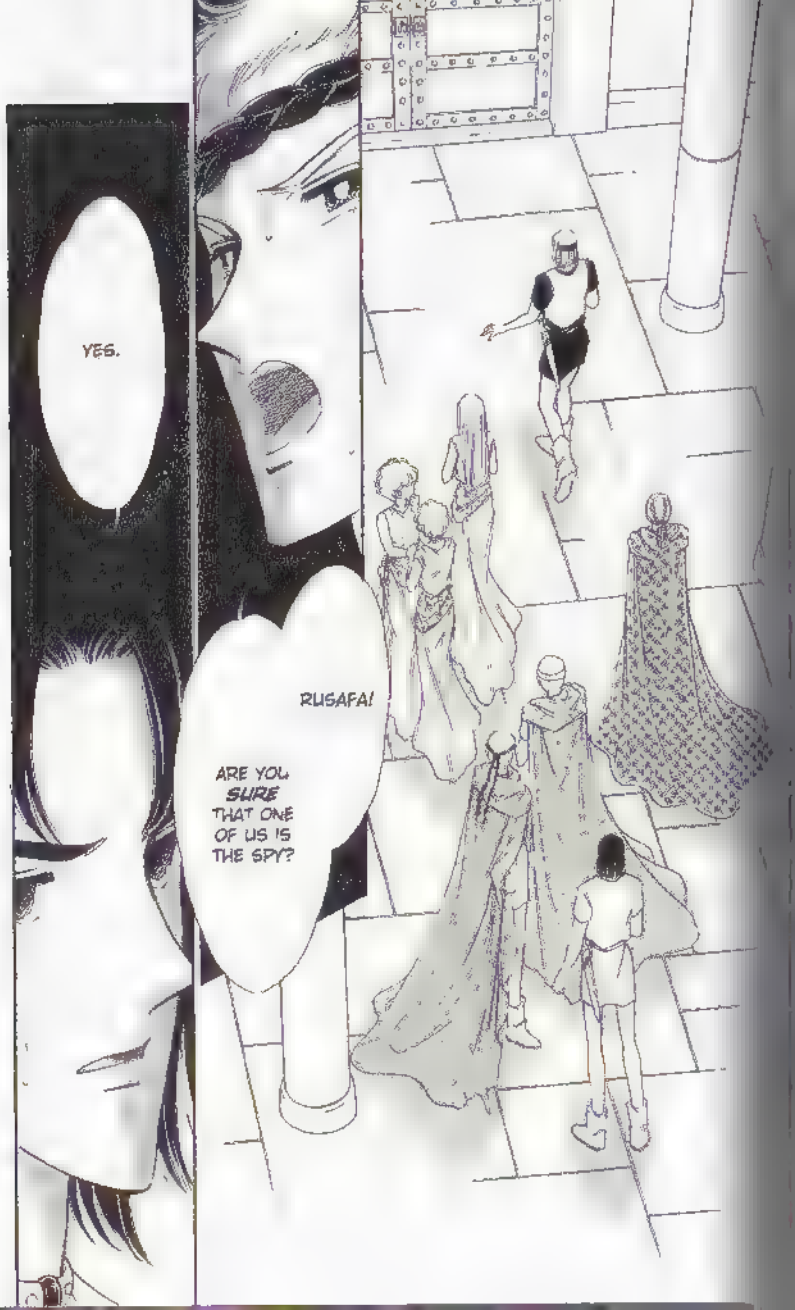

NO I CAN'T, BUT THAT'S NOT THE POINT.
RUSAFA BROUGHT THIS INFORMATION FROM EGYPT, SO I MUST TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.
DO YOU BELIEVE IT TO BE SO, YOUR MAJESTY?!
CAN YOU REALLY IMAGINE THAT ANY OF US WOULD BETRAY YOU?
RUSAFA!
IS *THIS* WHAT YOU REFUSED TO TELL US?


IN BRINGING THAT PERSON INTO MY CONFIDENCE
IT INVOLVES YOU, MY CLOSEST, MOST TRUSTED AIDES. IF ONE OF YOU HAS BETRAYED ME, I AM THE ONE TO BLAME FOR MY POOR JUDGMENT...
WOULD ANY OF YOU HAVE ACTED DIFFERENTLY? RUSAFA KNOWS HOW DELICATE THIS MATTER IS
UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES I WOULD HAVE KEPT THIS TO MYSELF IN ORDER TO CAUSE...
...THE LEAST AMOUNT OF DISRUPTION WHILE FERRETING OUT THE SPY.

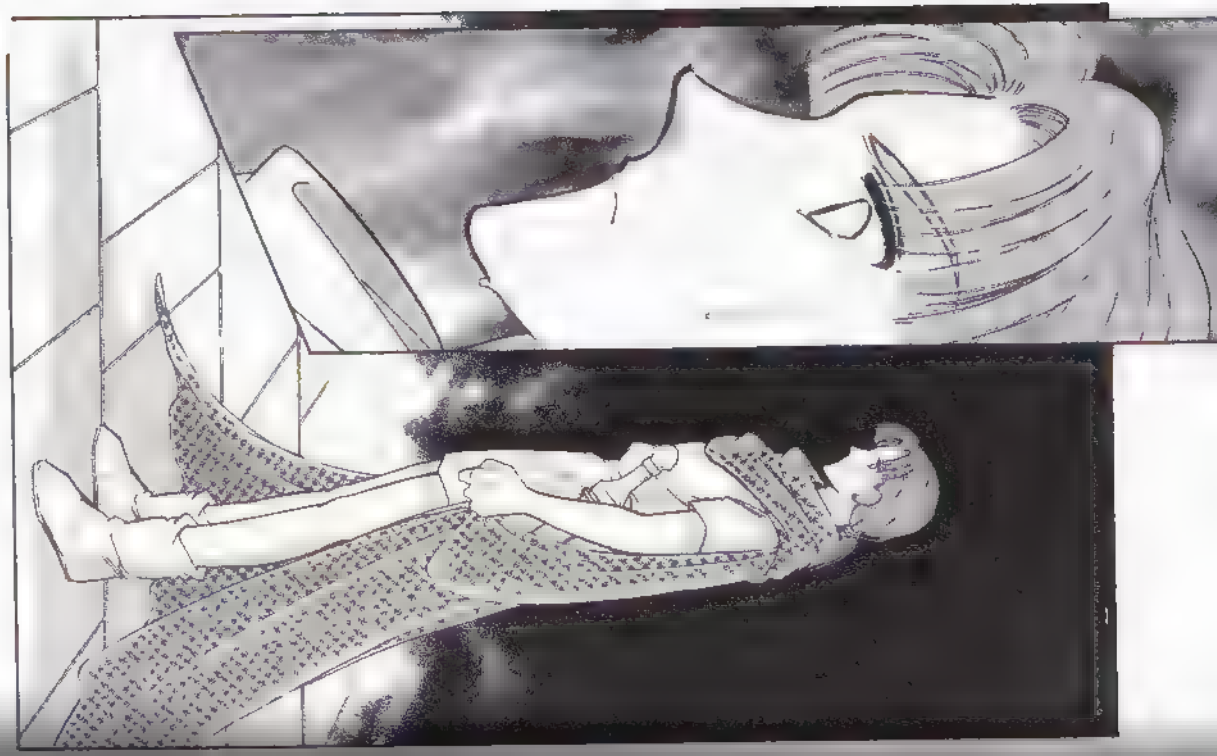

BUT THAT WOULD TAKE TIME. A LUXURY PRESENTLY IN SHORT SUPPLY...
.. BECAUSE AT THIS VERY MOMENT YURI IS BEING HELD PRISONER IN EGYPT.
I AM REASSURED BY THE FACT THAT SHE IS IN RAMSES' CARE..
..NO MAN WOULD BE ABLE TO GUARANTEE HER SAFETY
..BUT IF OTHER EGYPTIANS LEARN WHO SHE TRULY IS, AND WHAT SHE IS TO ME..


KLANK
THAT IS ALL.
YOU'VE ALL HELPED WIN A GREAT VICTORY TODAY
NOW GO AND GET SOME REST
YOU MUST ALL UNDERSTAND THAT.
THE INFORMATION PASSED TO EGYPT.
IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO YURI BECAUSE OF
I WILL PERSONALLY STRIKE THE HEAD OFF THE NECK OF WHOEVER PROVIDED IT!

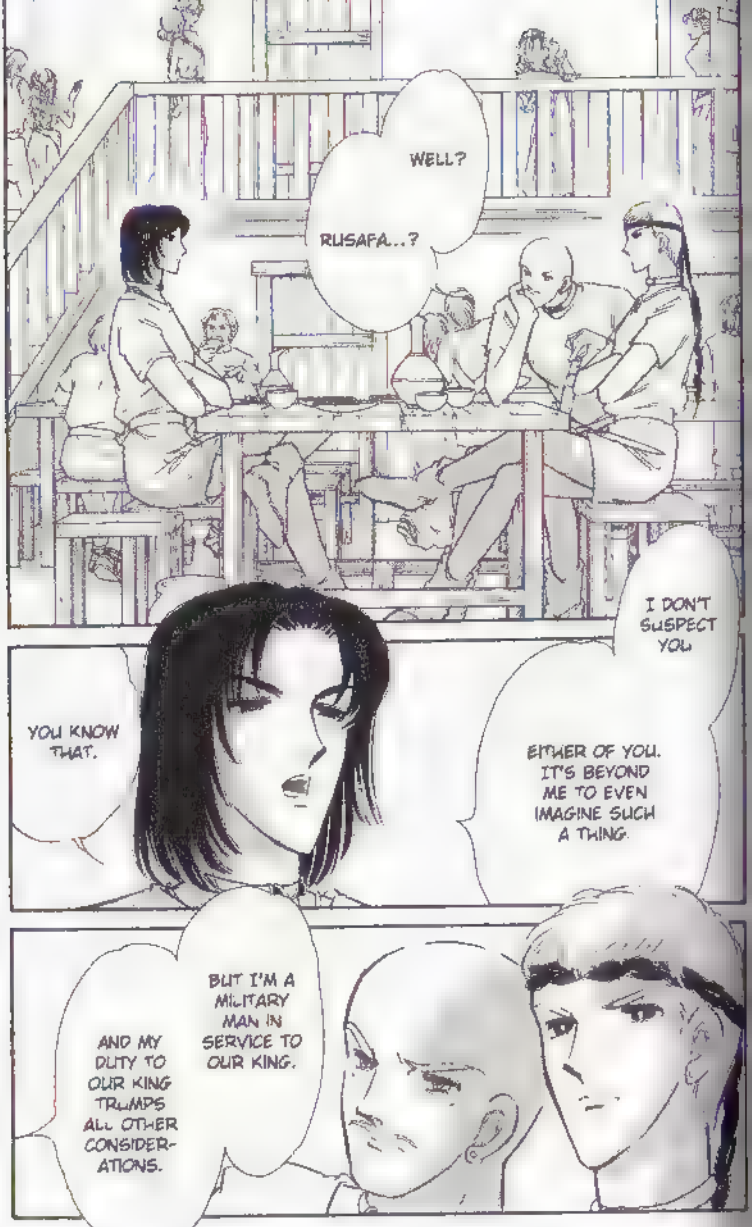

I FER-VENTLY HOPE..
..MY SWORD WON'T BE STAINED...
K-CHK
GRAB
BY THE BLOOD OF ANYONE HERE

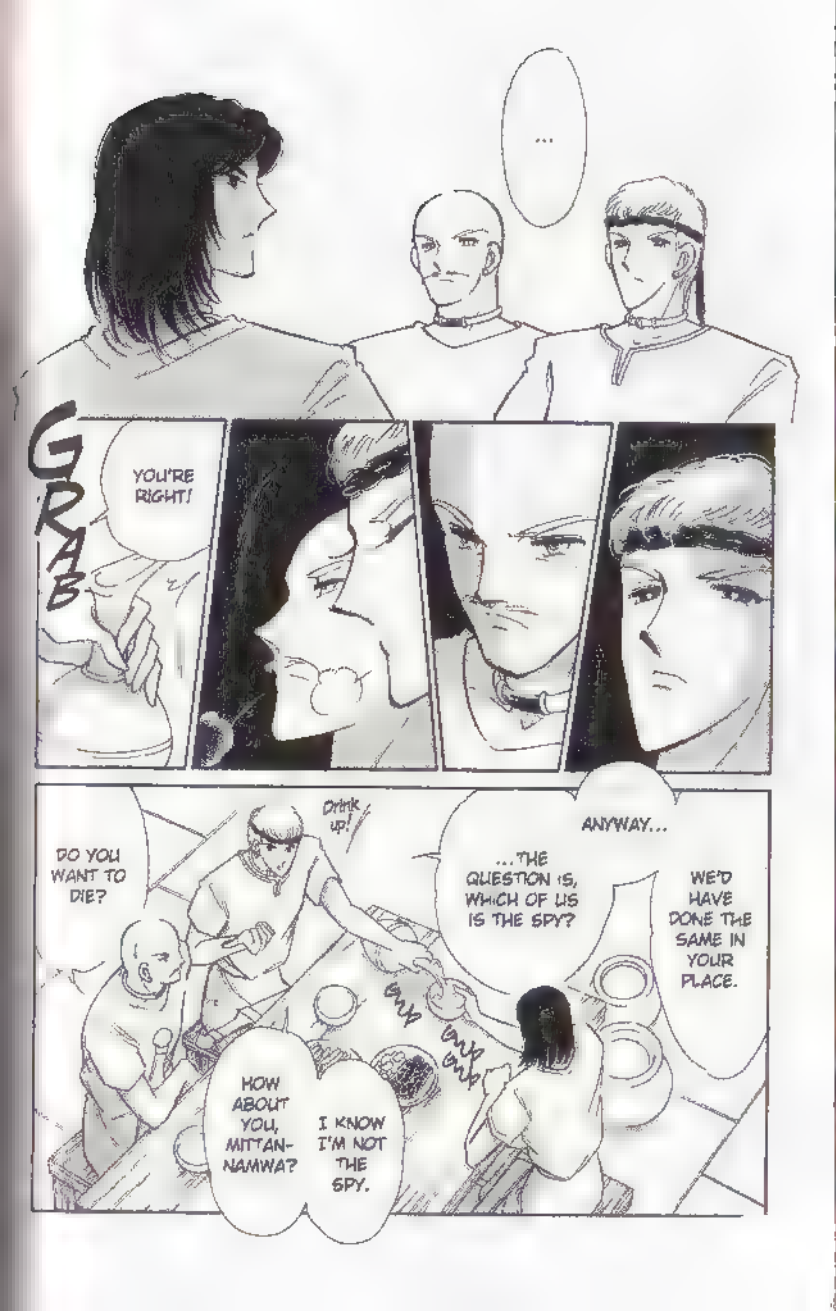

YES.
RUSAFA!
ARE YOU *SURE* THAT ONE OF US IS THE SPY?

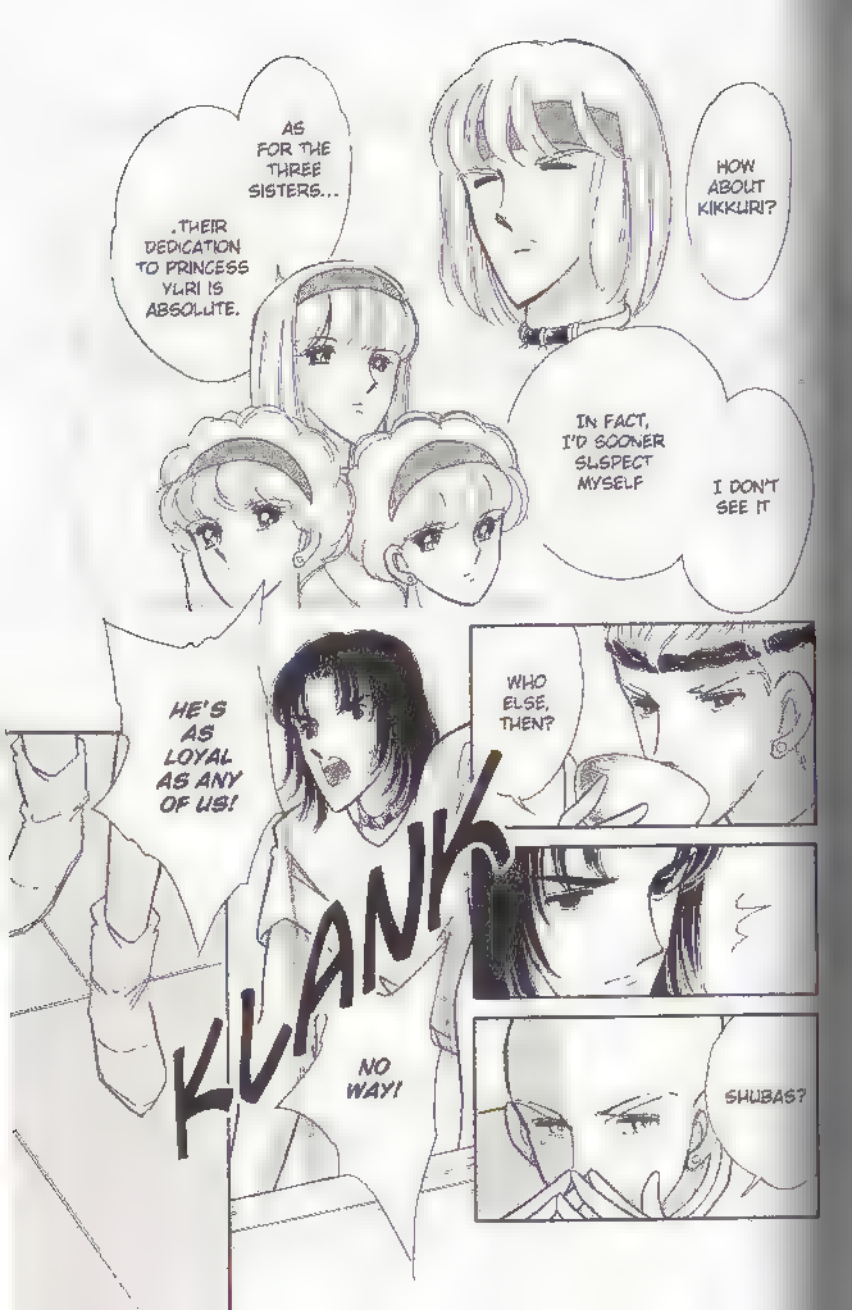
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE!
THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE!
WE'D SOONER CUT OUR *OWN* HEADS OFF THAN BETRAY OUR KING!
...THAT ONLY ONE OF US COULD HAVE PASSED ALONG!
I KNOW! BUT THE EGYPTIANS HAVE INFORMATION...

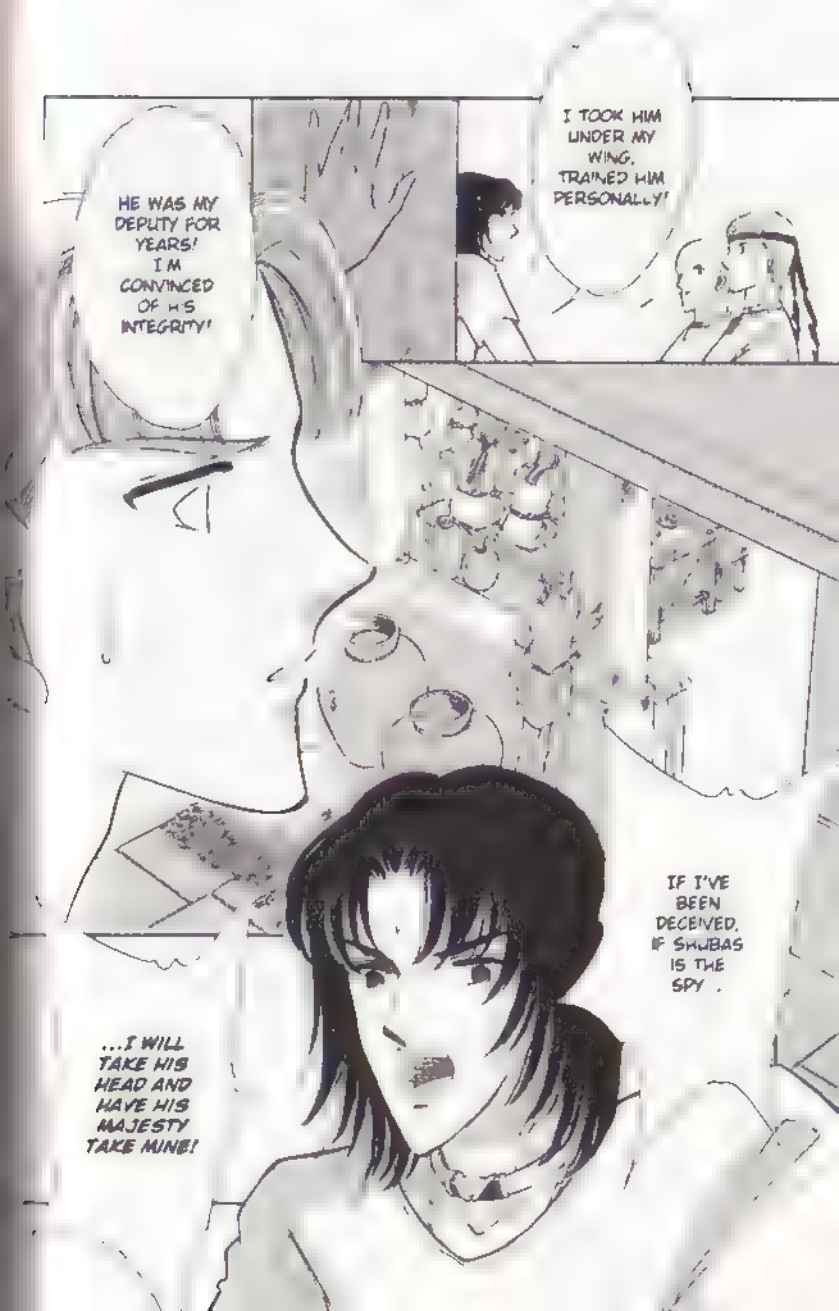


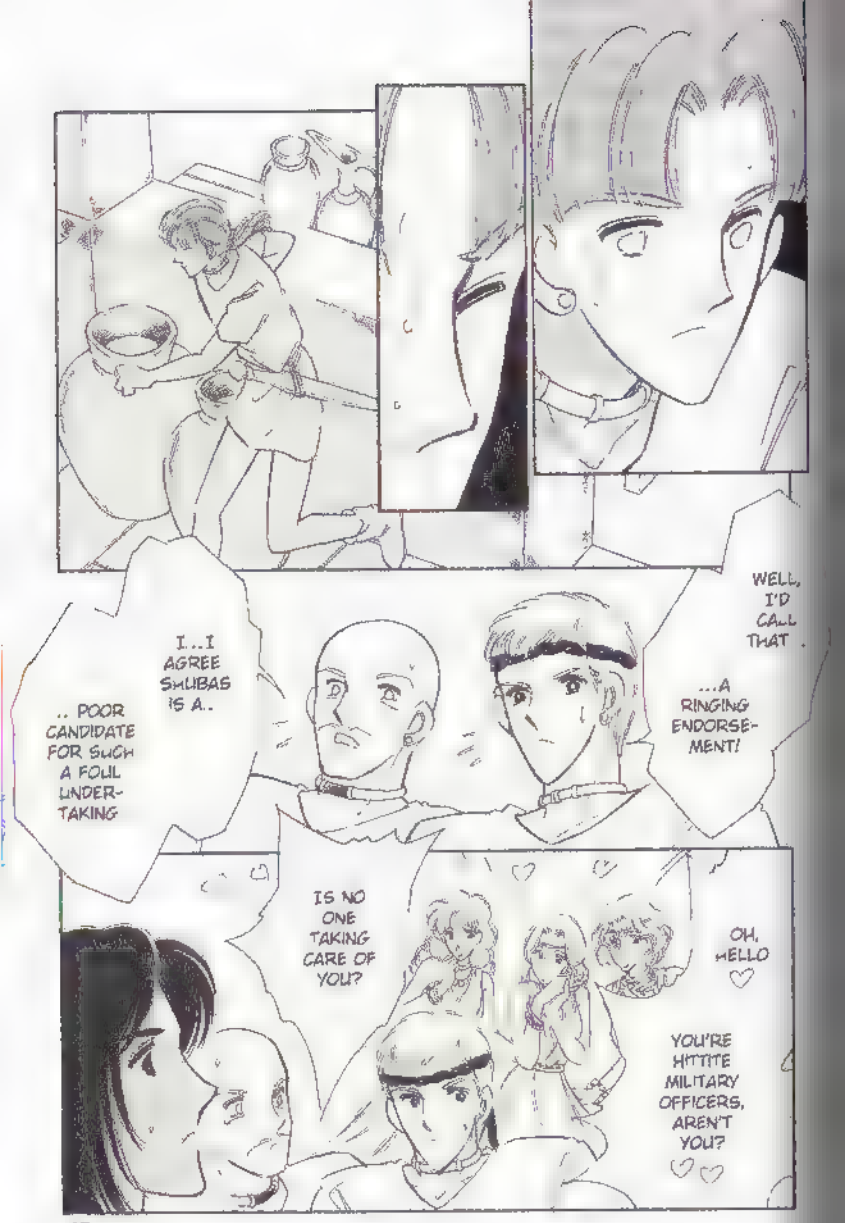
YOU DIDN'T...
TELL US ABOUT THE SPY. WHY NOT?
IS IT BECAUSE YOU SUSPECT US?

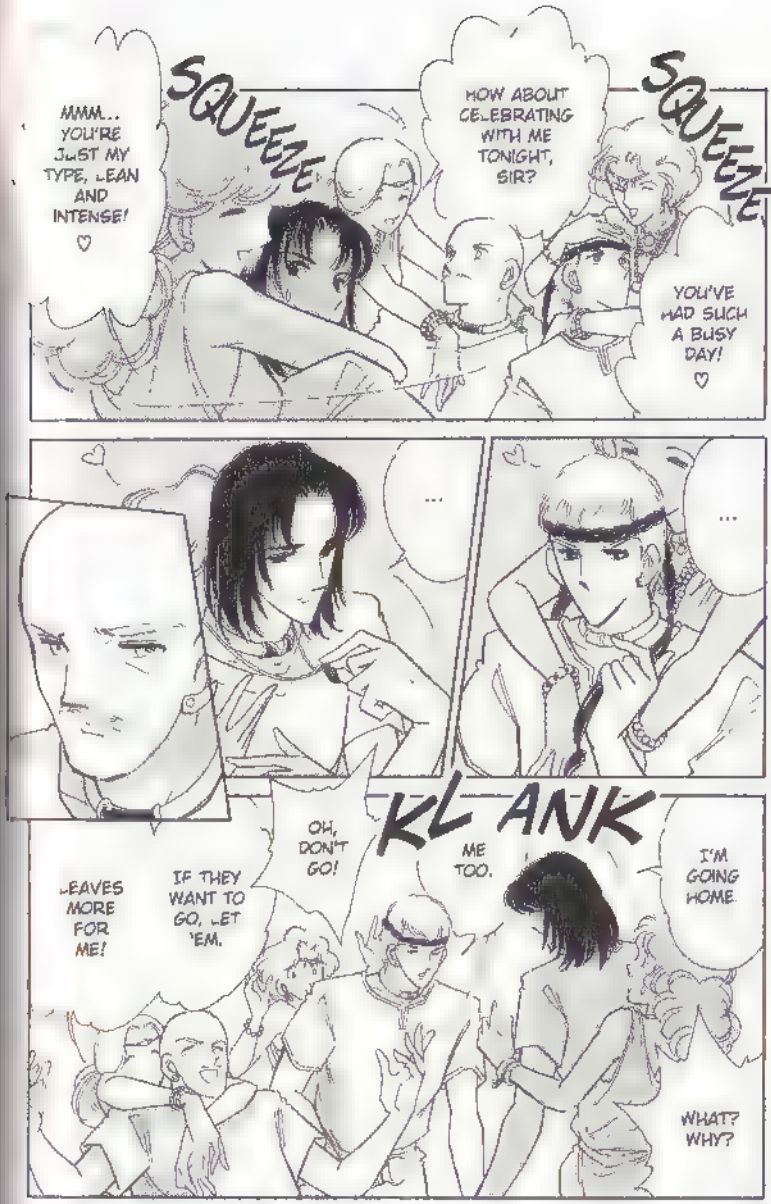

WELL?
RUSAFA...?
I DON'T SUSPECT YOU
EITHER OF YOU. IT'S BEYOND ME TO EVEN IMAGINE SUCH A THING.
YOU KNOW THAT.
BUT I'M A MILITARY MAN IN SERVICE TO OUR KING.
AND MY DUTY TO OUR KING TRUMPS ALL OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.

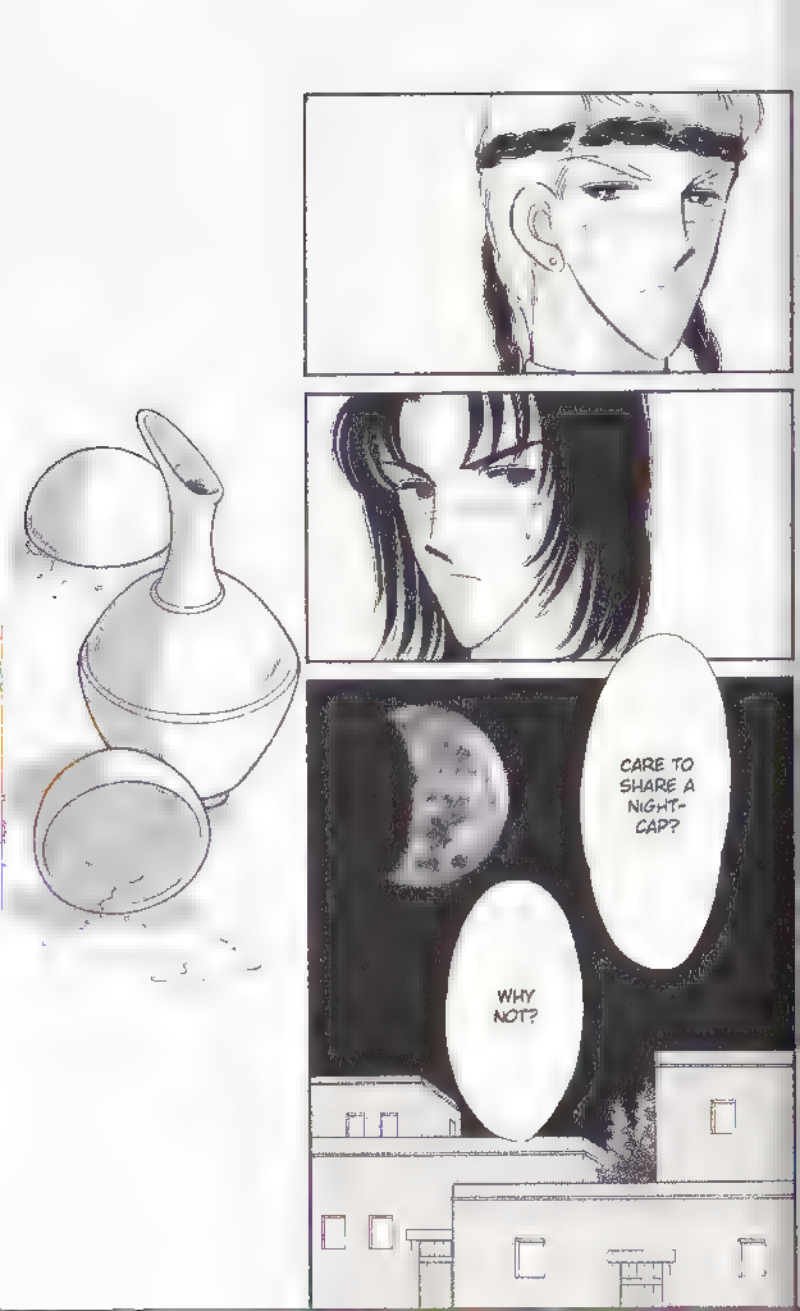

...
GRAB
YOU'RE RIGHT!
DRINK UP!
DO YOU WANT TO DIE?
ANYWAY...
...THE QUESTION IS, WHICH OF US IS THE SPY?
WE'D HAVE DONE THE SAME IN YOUR PLACE.
GULP GULP GULP
HOW ABOUT YOU, MITTAN-NAMWA?
I KNOW I'M NOT THE SPY.

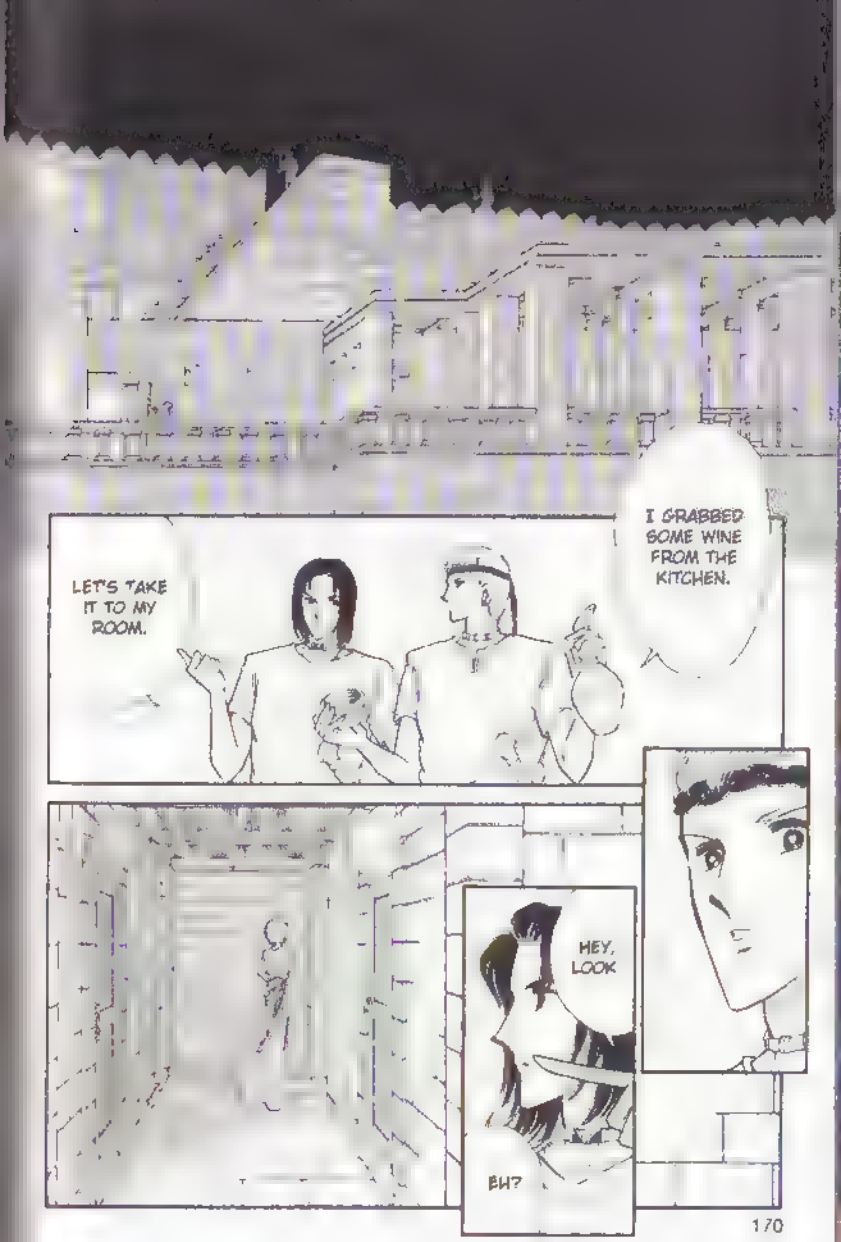

AS FOR THE THREE SISTERS...
.THEIR DEDICATION TO PRINCESS YURI IS ABSOLUTE.
HOW ABOUT KIKKURI?
IN FACT, I'D SOONER SUSPECT MYSELF
I DON'T SEE IT
HE'S AS LOYAL AS ANY OF US!
KLANK
NO WAY!
WHO ELSE, THEN?
SHUBAS?

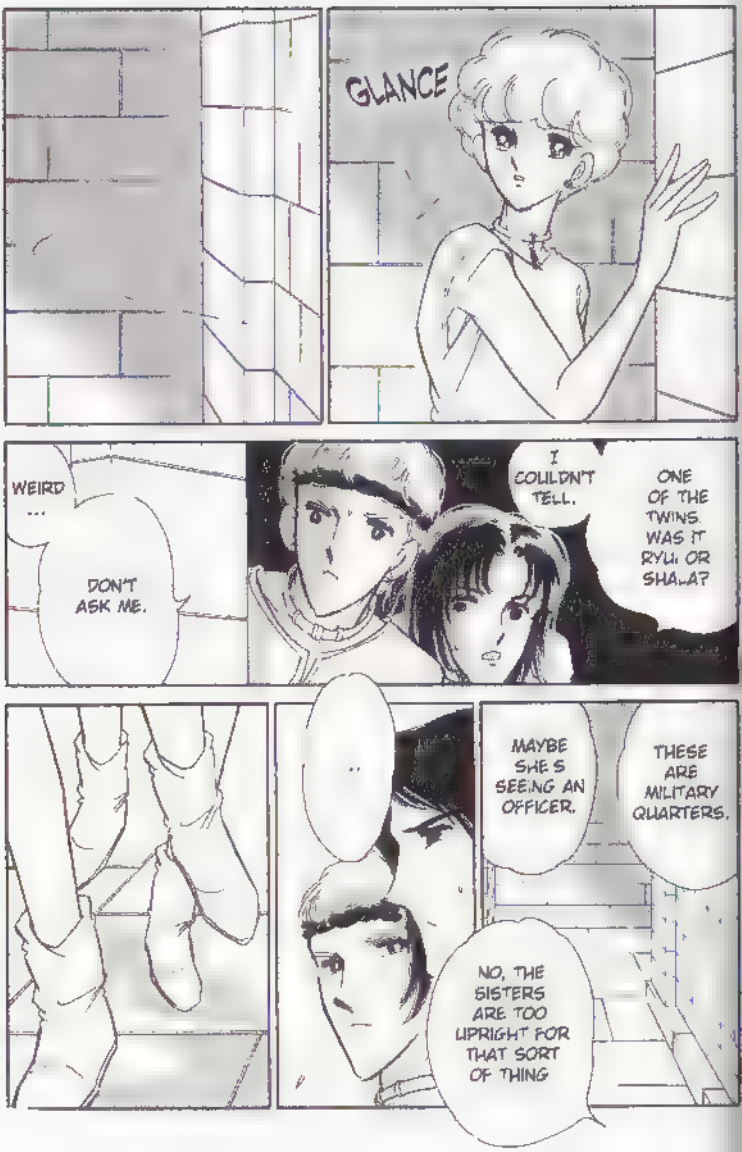

I TOOK HIM UNDER MY WING, TRAINED HIM PERSONALLY!
HE WAS MY DEPUTY FOR YEARS! I'M CONVINCED OF HIS INTEGRITY!
IF I'VE BEEN DECEIVED, IF SHUBAS IS THE SPY .
...I WILL TAKE HIS HEAD AND HAVE HIS MAJESTY TAKE MINE!


WELL, I'D CALL THAT
...A RINGING ENDORSE-MENT!
I..I AGREE SHUBAS IS A..
.. POOR CANDIDATE FOR SUCH A FOUL UNDER-TAKING
IS NO ONE TAKING CARE OF YOU?
OH, HELLO
YOU'RE HITTITE MILITARY OFFICERS, AREN'T YOU?

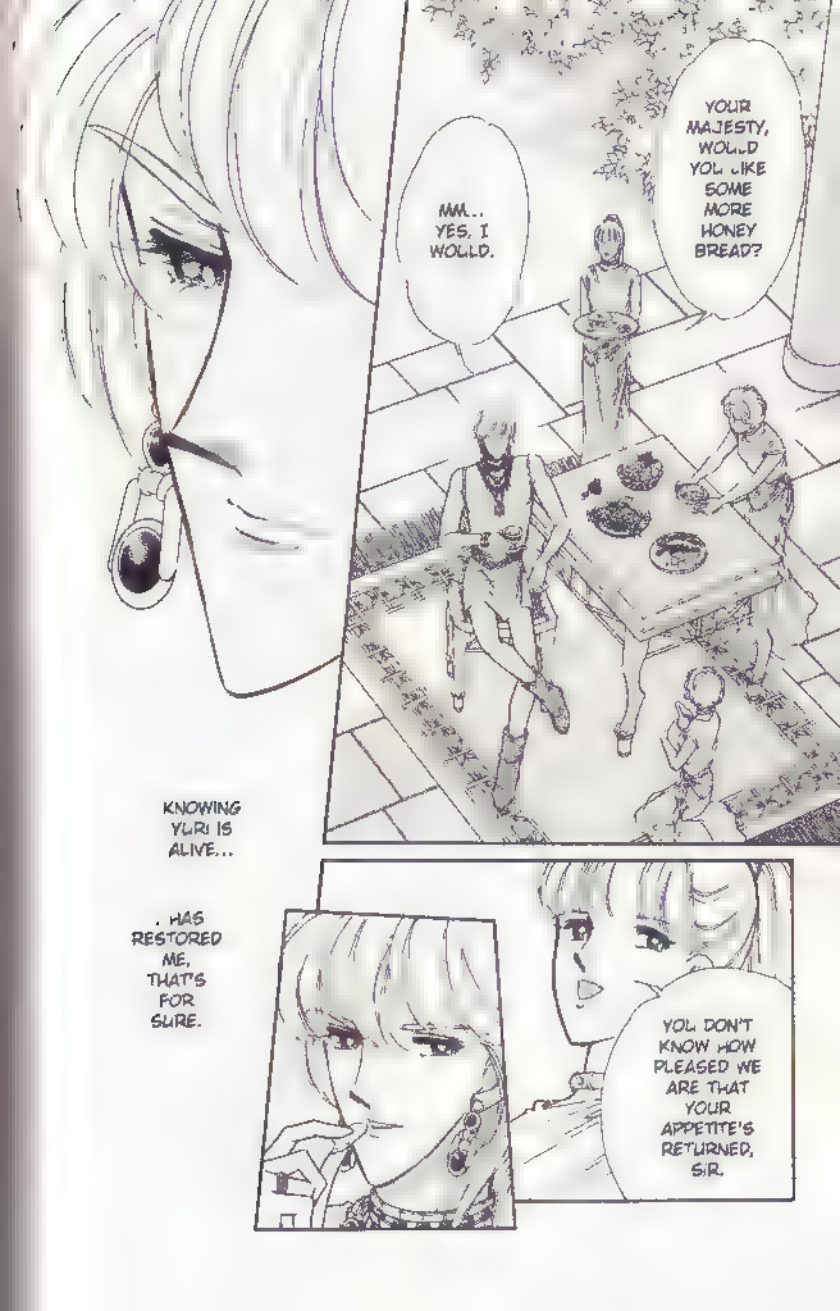

SQUEEZE
MMM... YOU'RE JUST MY TYPE, LEAN AND INTENSE! ♡
HOW ABOUT CELEBRATING WITH ME TONIGHT, SIR?
SQUEEZE
YOU'VE HAD SUCH A BUSY DAY! ♡
...
...
KLANK
I'M GOING HOME.
ME TOO.
OH, DON'T GO!
IF THEY WANT TO GO, LET 'EM.
LEAVES MORE FOR ME!
WHAT? WHY?

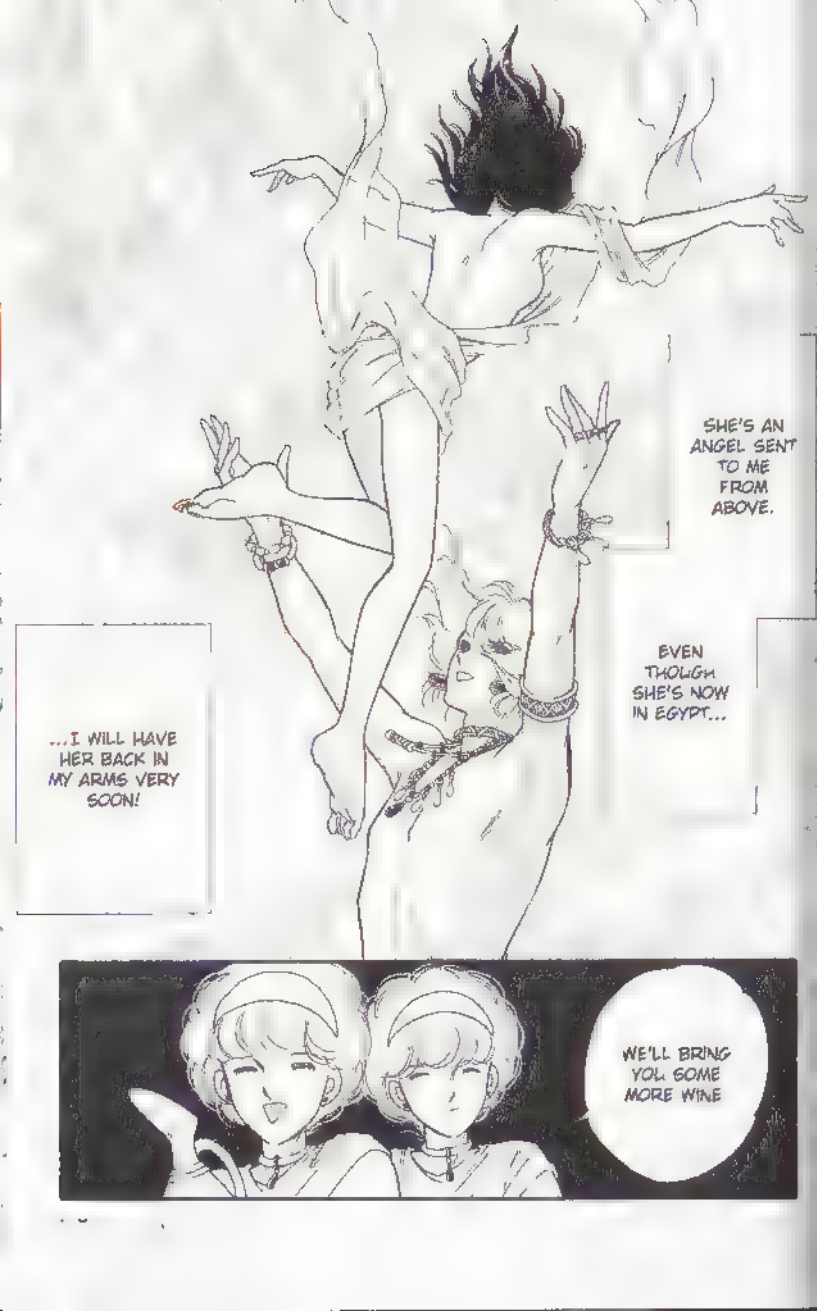

CARE TO SHARE A NIGHT-CAP?
WHY NOT?


I GRABBED SOME WINE FROM THE KITCHEN.
LET'S TAKE IT TO MY ROOM.
HEY, LOOK
EH?

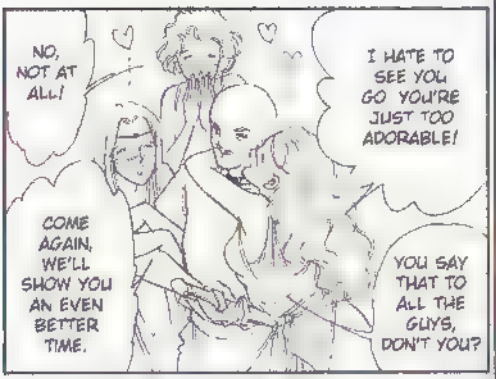

GLANCE
WEIRD ...
DON'T ASK ME.
I COULDN'T TELL.
ONE OF THE TWINS. WAS IT RYU: OR SHALA?
..
MAYBE SHE'S SEEING AN OFFICER.
THESE ARE MILITARY QUARTERS.
NO, THE SISTERS ARE TOO UPRIGHT FOR THAT SORT OF THING

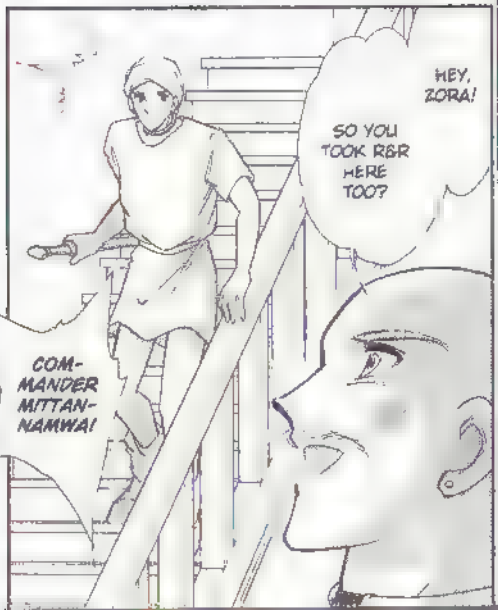
HUSH.
.. MILITARY INFORMATION IS STORED
SQUEAK
WHERE DID SHE GO?
I WONDER IF THIS IS WHERE .

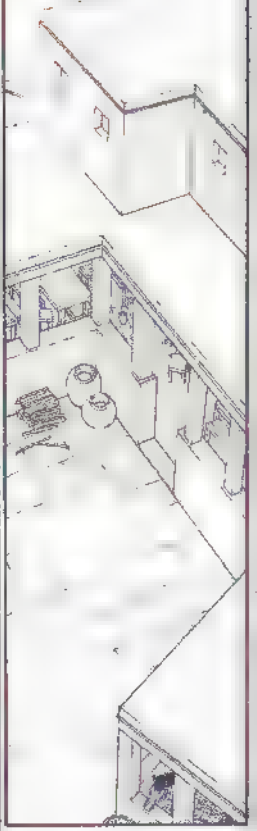

YOUR MAJESTY, WOULD YOU LIKE SOME MORE HONEY BREAD?
MM... YES, I WOULD.
KNOWING YURI IS ALIVE...
. HAS RESTORED ME, THAT'S FOR SURE.
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW PLEASED WE ARE THAT YOUR APPETITE'S RETURNED, SIR.

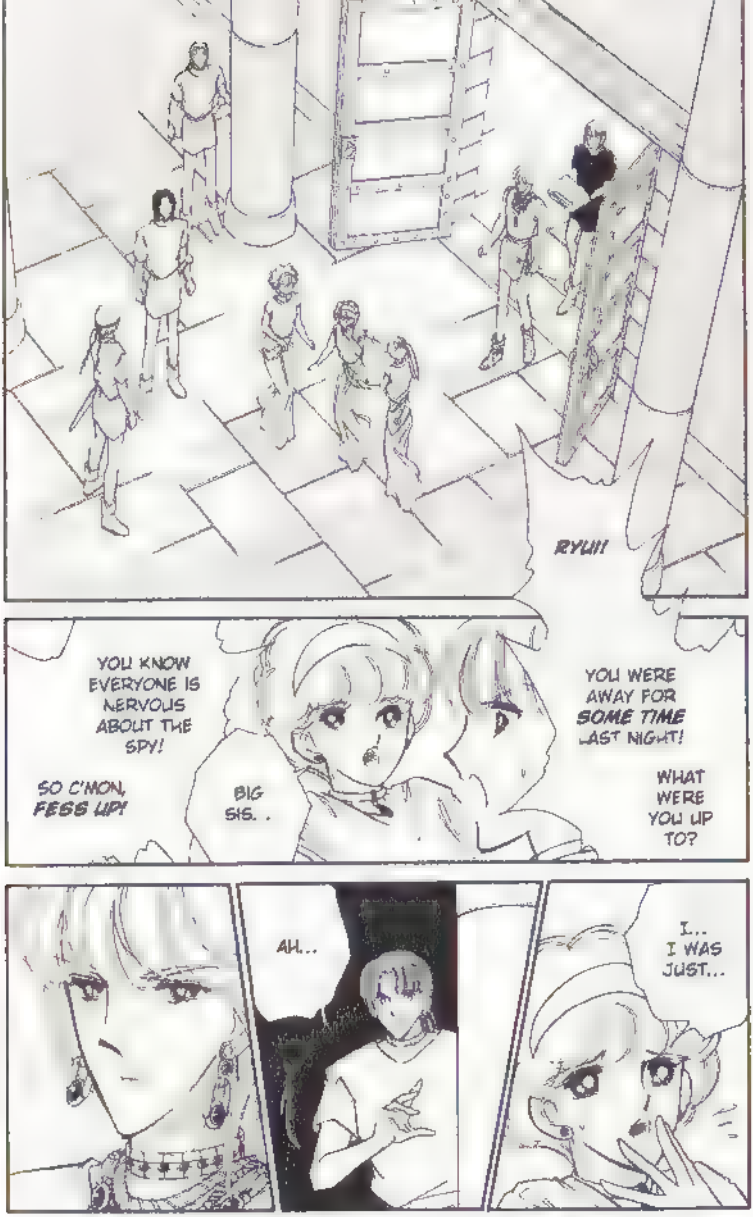

SHE'S AN ANGEL SENT TO ME FROM ABOVE.
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S NOW IN EGYPT...
...I WILL HAVE HER BACK IN MY ARMS VERY SOON!
WE'LL BRING YOU SOME MORE WINE

GOOD MORNING.
OH! HERE'S KASH AND RUSAFA.
...IN THE PALACE'S MILITARY SECTION LAST NIGHT WE DON'T KNOW WHICH OF YOU IT WAS, BUT..
I'LL GET RIGHT TO IT. WE SAW ONE OF YOU TWINS...
!!


NO, NOT AT ALL!
I HATE TO SEE YOU GO YOU'RE JUST TOO ADORABLE!
COME AGAIN, WE'LL SHOW YOU AN EVEN BETTER TIME.
YOU SAY THAT TO ALL THE GUYS, DON'T YOU?

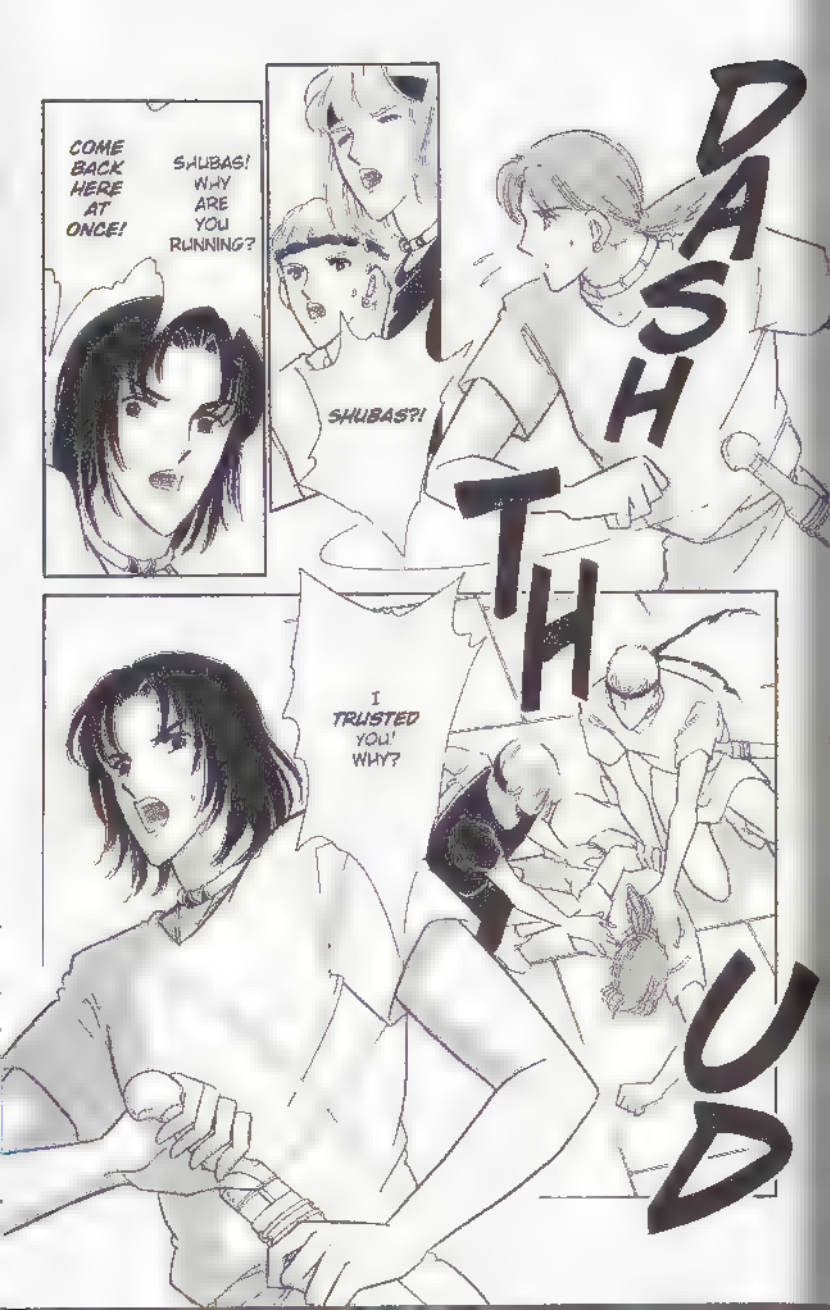

HEY, ZORA!
SO YOU TOOK R&R HERE TOO?
COM-MANDER MITTAN-NAMWA!

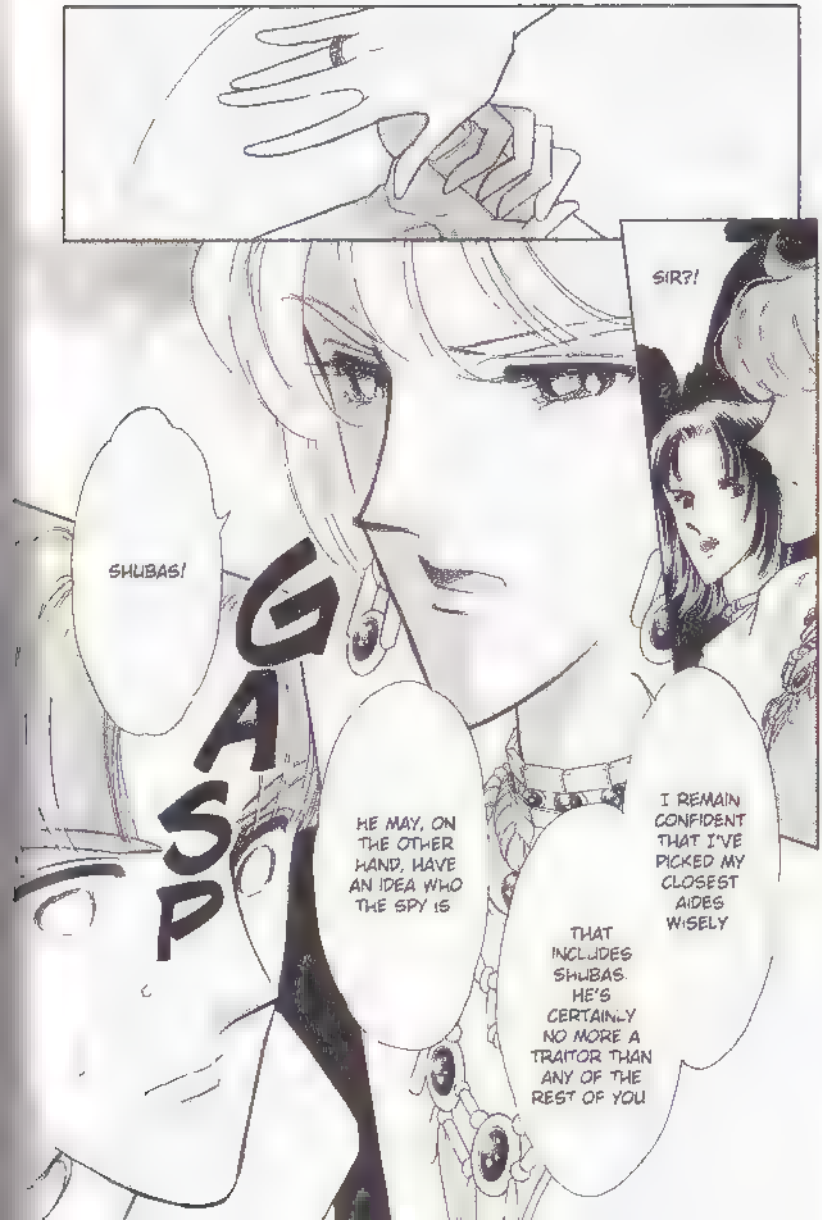



RYU!!
YOU KNOW EVERYONE IS NERVOUS ABOUT THE SPY!
SO C'MON, FESS UP!
BIG SIS. .
YOU WERE AWAY FOR SOME TIME LAST NIGHT!
WHAT WERE YOU UP TO?
AH...
I... I WAS JUST...

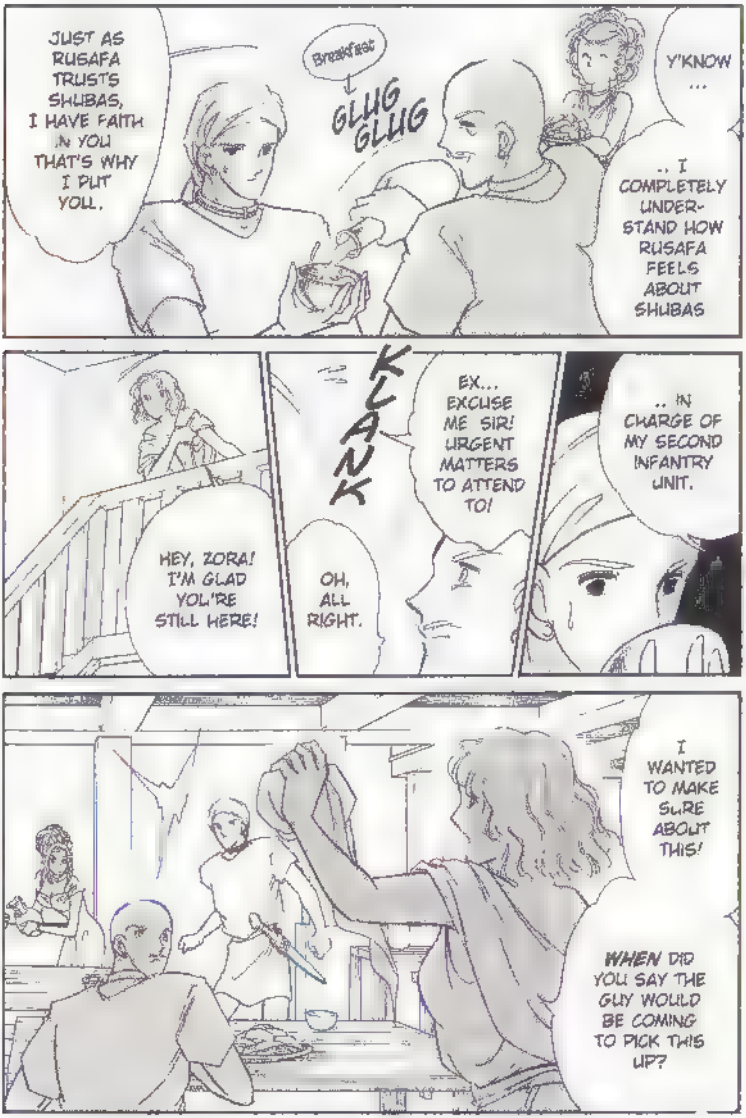
SHE WAS WITH ME LAST NIGHT, IN FACT!
RYUI!
DID NOT GO AROUND SPYING!
KIKKURI ?
PLEASE FORGIVE ME SISTER!
SHAME ON YOU!!
AND WITH EVERY-THING ELSE GOING ON.
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU TWO WERE
I'M SORRY YOUR MAJESTY!
WE MET THERE BECAUSE IT'S DESERTED AT NIGHT
SLAP

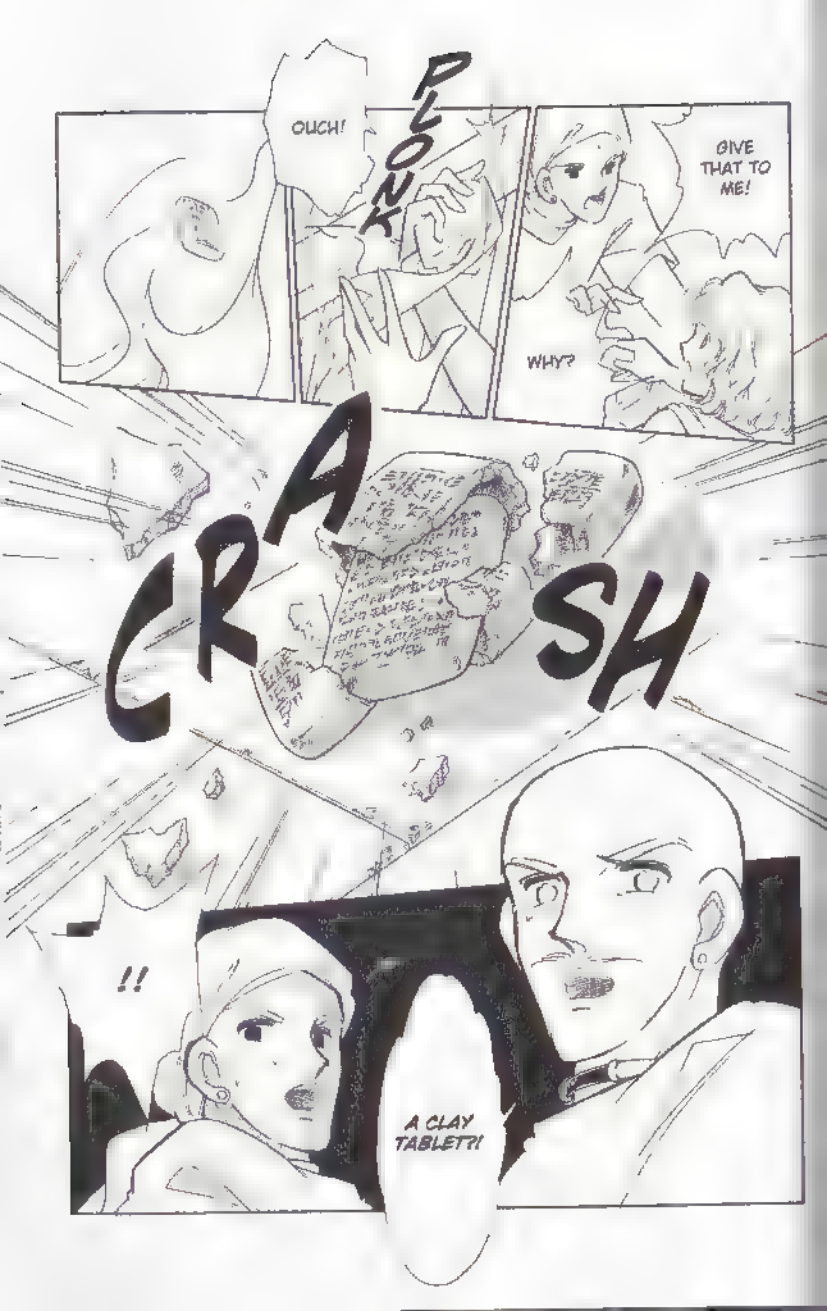
...AND SO HAPPY WHEN SHE CAME HOME...
...I WAS SO WORRIED WHEN RYU! WENT MISSING IN THE SHIPWRECK..
I... I KNEW IT WAS UNSEEMLY, BUT. .
OMIGOSH!
WE'LL CELEBRATE YOUR WEDDING WHEN WE RETURN TO HATTUSA.
...WE ARE AT WAR.
YOUR MAJESTY...
I'M PLEASED TO SEE LOVE IN BLOOM, BUT...
SHUBAS?
NOW, I HAVE A QUESTION FOR SHUBAS.


DASH THUD
COME BACK HERE AT ONCE!
SHUBAS! WHY ARE YOU RUNNING?
SHUBAS?!
I TRUSTED YOU! WHY?

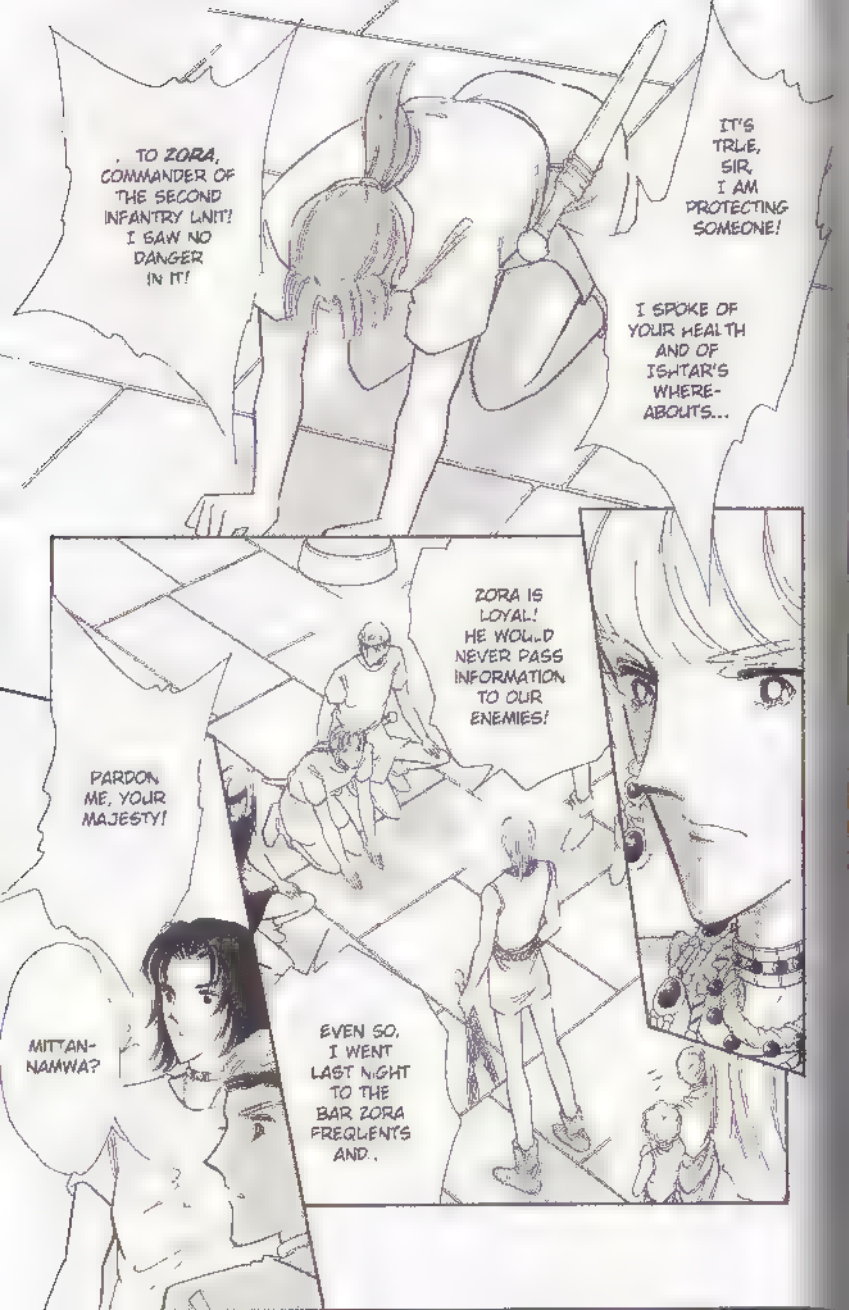

SIR?!
I REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT I'VE PICKED MY CLOSEST AIDES WISELY
THAT INCLUDES SHUBAS. HE'S CERTAINLY NO MORE A TRAITOR THAN ANY OF THE REST OF YOU
HE MAY, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE AN IDEA WHO THE SPY IS
SHUBAS!
GASP

...WHO ARE YOU TRYING TO PROTECT?
TELL ME..
HA HA HA HA

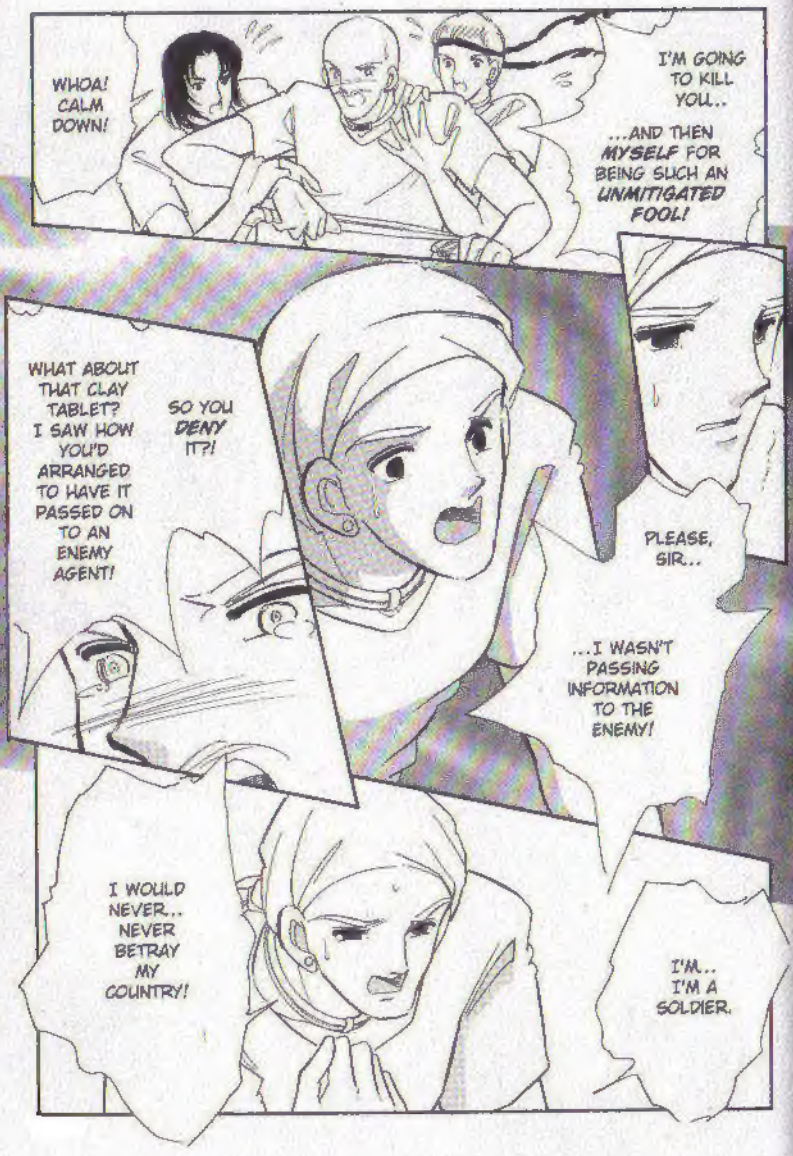

JUST AS RUSAFA TRUST'S SHUBAS, I HAVE FAITH IN YOU THAT'S WHY I PUT YOU1.
Breakfast
GLUG GLUG
Y'KNOW ...
.. I COMPLETELY UNDER-STAND HOW RUSAFA FEELS ABOUT SHUBAS
HEY, ZORA! I'M GLAD YOU'RE STILL HERE!
OH, ALL RIGHT.
KLANK
EX... EXCUSE ME SIR! URGENT MATTERS TO ATTEND TO!
.. IN CHARGE OF MY SECOND INFANTRY UNIT.
I WANTED TO MAKE SURE ABOUT THIS!
WHEN DID YOU SAY THE GUY WOULD BE COMING TO PICK THIS UP?

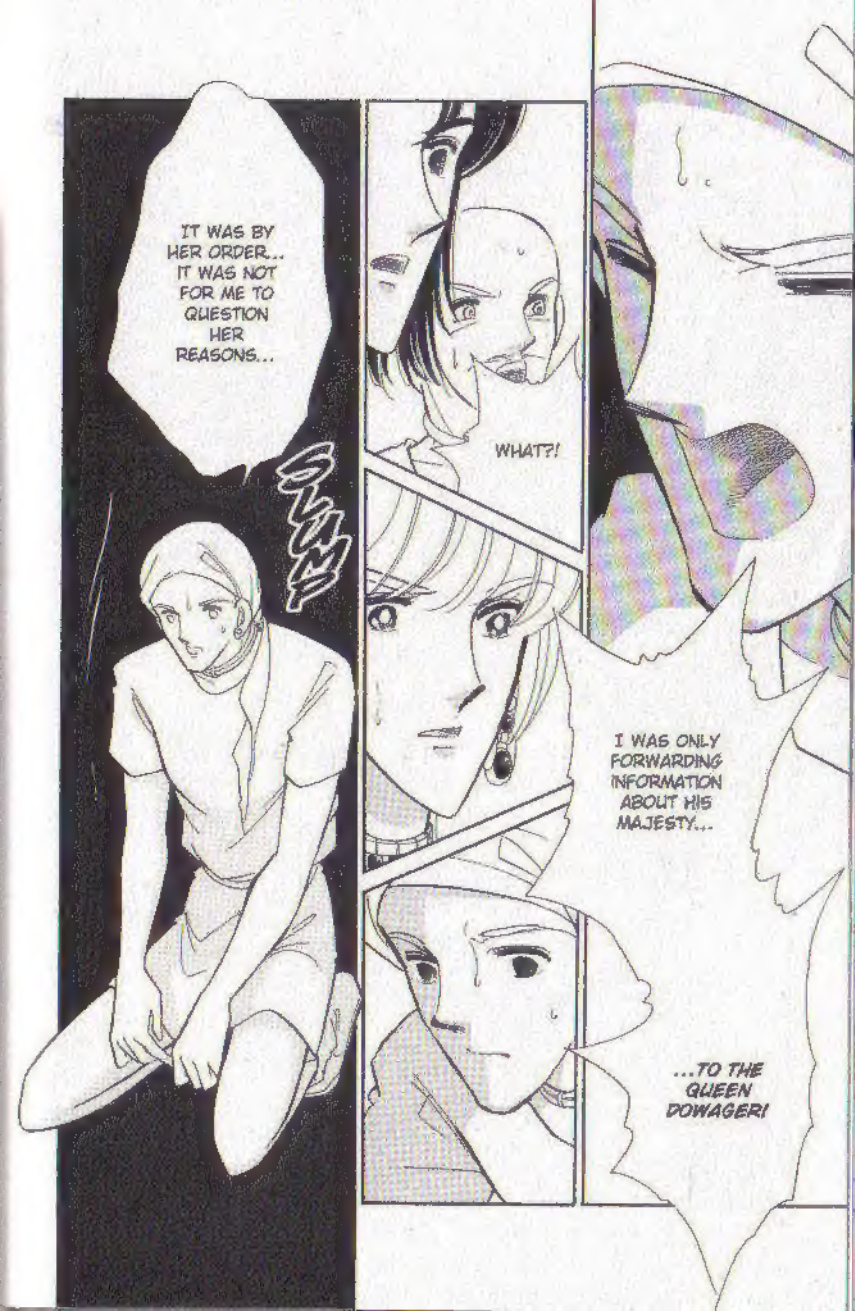

OUCH!
PLONK
GIVE THAT TO ME!
WHY?
CRASH
!!
A CLAY TABLET?!

"HIS MAJESTY IS NO LONGER ILL.
"YURI ISHTAR IS WITH GENERAL RAMSES IN MEMPHIS AT THE MOMENT .."
?!
WAIT...!
ZORA!
YOU ARE THE SPY?!
Eek!
WHACK


. TO ZORA, COMMANDER OF THE SECOND INFANTRY UNIT! I SAW NO DANGER IN IT!
IT'S TRUE, SIR, I AM PROTECTING SOMEONE!
I SPOKE OF YOUR HEALTH AND OF ISHTAR'S WHEREABOUTS...
ZORA IS LOYAL! HE WOULD NEVER PASS INFORMATION TO OUR ENEMIES!
PARDON ME, YOUR MAJESTY!
EVEN SO, I WENT LAST NIGHT TO THE BAR ZORA FREQUENTS AND.
MITTANNAMWA?

MY MAN, AND MY RESPONSI-BILITY! YOU MAY HAVE BOTH OUR HEADS, SIR!
HERE!
HERE'S THE SPY, TO MY MORTAL SHAME!
THW
UMP
MITTANNAMWA...
ZORA!
IT WAS ZORA?!


WHOA! CALM DOWN!
I'M GOING TO KILL YOU..
...AND THEN MYSELF FOR BEING SUCH AN UNMITIGATED FOOL!
WHAT ABOUT THAT CLAY TABLET? I SAW HOW YOU'D ARRANGED TO HAVE IT PASSED ON TO AN ENEMY AGENT!
SO YOU DENY IT?!
PLEASE, SIR..
...I WASN'T PASSING INFORMATION TO THE ENEMY!
I WOULD NEVER.. NEVER BETRAY MY COUNTRY!
I'M.. I'M A SOLDIER.


IT WAS BY HER ORDER... IT WAS NOT FOR ME TO QUESTION HER REASONS...
SLUMP
WHAT?!
I WAS ONLY FORWARDING INFORMATION ABOUT HIS MAJESTY...
...TO THE QUEEN DOWAGER!

NAKIA! AND NEFERTITI! MAY THE GODS SAVE US FROM SCHEMING QUEEN DOWAGERS!